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Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8100th meeting

Tuesday, 14 November 2017, 11.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Cardi/Mr. Lambertini	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Fesko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2017/911)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2017/911)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite Ms. Vlora Çitaku to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/911, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tanin.

Mr. Tanin: At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and Italy on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am happy to join this meeting today.

The most recent reporting period is well covered in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/911) that we are reviewing today. In addition, I will brief the Council on recent significant developments that have taken place since the end of the reporting period.

On 19 October, municipal elections were conducted throughout Kosovo — the second Kosovo-wide local elections since the agreement of 19 April 2013 on the principles of the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. It was therefore the second time that the four Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities in northern Kosovo had participated in such elections. Those elections saw a strong turnout, particularly in the Serb-majority areas throughout Kosovo. They provided the population of Kosovo the opportunity to select their most immediate leaders and thus to express their views on their political priorities, as well as the performance and the delivery of the major competing parties. More than 7,000 candidates competed across Kosovo.

A significant increase in Serb participation occurred in the Serb-majority municipalities. The average turnout in those municipalities was 43.4 per cent, which can be compared with around 38 per cent in 2013. In the four northern municipalities, the difference was even more pronounced: a turnout of 44 per cent compared with 24 per cent turnout in 2013. The European Union (EU) deployed some 100 observers across Kosovo on election day while the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe facilitated the voting in the northern municipalities. Both organizations praised the generally peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections. However, the EU observers also stressed that, in the Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities, the campaign was affected by restricted competition and intimidation.

As I reported in August (see S/PV.8025), the multiple election processes this year in Kosovo produced a period in which few decisions could be undertaken with the necessary authority in Pristina. With the runoffs for mayoral elections scheduled for 19 November and the electoral process now nearing completion, I am hopeful that this will soon change. Some signs warrant cautious optimism. On 31 October, the new Assembly of Kosovo, passed a second reading of the Kosovo budget, despite the narrow majority held by the Government. The Serb caucus and the cabinet of the Prime Minister collaborated to achieve that result. Meanwhile, we see signs of movement on other particularly important social and economic issues that have repeatedly been delayed during the lengthy elections period.

This leaves the question of what lies ahead. During the past three months, I have had the opportunity to share views on the situation with a variety of interlocutors, in Pristina, in Belgrade and more widely. I would like to underline the fact that all sides generally share the view that the state of affairs between Belgrade and Pristina has the potential to evolve beyond the unfortunate long-standing impasse.

On 24 October, 40 new judges and 13 new State prosecutors from the Serb community were sworn into office in Kosovo — a significant step in the implementation of the first EU-facilitated agreement. These judicial officials will work as part of a unitary Kosovo justice system, and staffing and logistical arrangements are also under way, with support from all the international presences in Kosovo, including from the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The parties are to be commended for moving this forward. The judicial area had lagged notably behind other implementation achievements, such as police integration and implementation of technical steps in the telecommunications and utilities spheres.

However, it is equally important to note that overall, the implementation of agreements achieved in 2013, and even earlier, continue, at best, to be sporadic and variable. Within the framework of the EU-facilitated dialogue, technical implementation needs more meaningful commitment from both sides. The most obvious gap continues to be the lack of progress towards the implementation of the agreed association/community of Serb-majority municipalities.

Considerable headway has already been made, and the EU-facilitated dialogue in Brussels remains crucial as a core element in a wider process. Alongside that endeavour, the European Union's Berlin process, addressing the future enlargement potential of the European Union, has also progressed. Having begun at a 2014 Western Balkans summit, it has been followed by meetings in 2015 in Vienna, 2016 in Paris and 2017 in Trieste. Its strength lies in the inevitable conclusion that economic growth, peace and prosperity depend on the quality of relations among neighbours, the creation of a beneficial space of connectivity and the prospects for multifaceted interaction. My own discussions with leaders in Belgrade, Pristina and Tirana have convinced me that each of these important centres shares the same understanding of that principle.

In relation to the Belgrade-Pristina political dialogue, which has suffered from a long hiatus, what I can say today is that both sides are well aware of its importance and its potential during the coming year. To that effect, informal consultations with European Union facilitators have taken place over several months, most importantly with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms. Federica Mogherini.

Signs of political will and commitment to move forward seem increasingly evident. Populations are understandably frustrated by the lack of opportunities brought on by unresolved political mistrust and tensions. With the end of the election cycle, the time for action now moves ahead of the time for excuses. In many practical areas, political bickering and the failure to fully implement technical agreements place unacceptable burdens on the population. As one example, excessive administrative obstacles continue to discourage travel and commerce, despite agreements which purported to alleviate such impediments.

Allow me to offer another example, which has arisen during the past few days. In accordance with its mandate, UNMIK has continued to do everything within its authorized powers to support the implementation of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), which UNMIK signed on behalf of Kosovo in 2006. In practice, Pristina representatives working on CEFTA issues attend all CEFTA meetings. UNMIK's basic participation has always been in accordance with legal statutes. Despite these facts, some actors have recently sought to repoliticize, through public rhetoric, those otherwise highly practical, functional and beneficial arrangements. Permit me, in this forum, to be very clear. UNMIK participation continues strictly to the extent required by CEFTA members to ensure its functionality, which in turn supports economic opportunity throughout the region. UNMIK will equally support any agreement reached by CEFTA Members which would allow them to work effectively together. In our view such arrangements are best achieved through discussions among those concerned, not through the media.

I have previously taken note here and commended President Vučić's initiative for internal dialogue on Serbia's stance towards the Kosovo issue. I have also taken note that Prime Minister Edi Rama in Tirana has stated that such internal examinations will not be lost in Tirana or Pristina either. These forward-looking positions do a real service to the people, as they seek to address the facts head on. Despite the many looming global challenges, leaders in the European Union have also made focused engagement in the region a priority. All parties now need to play their part as well. That is the thesis upon which the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue rests. It is important that the potential for embarking on a sustainable peace process not be hindered by inflexibility or simple inaction.

While dialogue and other diplomatic initiatives can provide a new basis for peacebuilding, serious work to address pressing and immediate issues also needs urgent attention in Pristina. The much-needed provision of economic and employment opportunities, the need to counter public corruption and ensure public accountability at all levels and, perhaps above all, fighting organized criminality are crucial objectives.

Our mission in Kosovo is to work primarily at the grass-roots level to support the impulse of people to pursue the benefits of cooperation and reconciliation. We apply the funds available to us to support ground-level initiatives that shape the future and perspective of the post-conflict generation in Kosovo. Talent knows no boundaries of gender, ethnicity or political affiliation.

We find energy within this new Government, which is already taking new steps to work in a multi-ethnic partnership. We find it in region-wide initiatives to remove the scourge of political interference in the delivery of justice and the rule of law. We find it in the bold initiatives being undertaken by all to fundamentally examine the issues that will allow the Western Balkans to continue to advance their European aspirations.

Our attention has also been focused on issues that require more emphasis and are essential for reconciliation and the rebuilding of trust. Those include initiatives to engage women in the political process, help bring attention to the untold stories of those targeted during the time of conflict, promote the role of youth in peace and security, and do more to resolve the cases of many persons who are still missing from the war. We stand in open partnership with all Governments to address those issues. Likewise, we recognize the immense challenges of ensuring the freedom of cultural and religious identity in the fight against extreme and close-minded views, which are a threat and plague not only in our area, but throughout the world at present.

UNMIK continues to play its role in working towards a closer partnership with all international presences on the ground and with all actors engaged, particularly at a time when we are witnessing new dynamics emerging in the region. The final objective of the Mission remains clear. With the Council's support, we will achieve sustained peace and the opportunities it provides to individuals to fulfil their aspirations and their potential.

The President: I thank Mr. Tanin for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dačić.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian, interpretation provided by the delegation*): I would like to thank Secretary-General Guterres and his Special Representative, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for their submission of the report before us (S/2017/911) and their overall engagement in the realization of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under resolution 1244 (1999). I also thank the President and members of the Security Council for recognizing the importance of the continued review and consideration of the issue.

UNMIK's presence in Kosovo and Metohija in an undiminished scope and under an unchanged mandate as a guarantor of the status neutrality of the international presence is of paramount importance to promoting security and stability and to building trust between the communities of Kosovo and Metohija. Strengthening its financial and human resources will enable the international community to comprehensively and sustainably assess and address the problems and challenges facing the Serbian and non-Albanian populations every day.

The political situation, given its sensitivity in Kosovo and Metohija, has a major impact on building trust and confidence among its communities. Therefore, UNMIK's undiminished presence ensures the necessary security and provides guarantees and impetus to Serbs and non-Albanians to involve themselevs in the processes initiated by the Brussels Agreement, without fear for their future or the future of their families.

The fact that 18 years after the arrival of the international presence in the province, some 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were forced to flee Kosovo and Metohija continue to live in Serbia, outside the province, is a powerful argument that UNMIK's scope should not be changed. Sustainable return has been achieved by only 1.9 per cent of IDPs, and I am sure that the Secretary-General will agree that that is one of the key questions that UNMIK should accentuate in the future. I would also point out, however, that the number of IDPs in Kosovo and Metohija cited in the report does not adequately reflect the magnitude of the problem and does not call for the commensurate attention of the Mission.

A number of structural shortcomings in the institutional and judiciary systems of Kosovo and Metohija are noted in the report. Those shortcomings

have negative consequences for vulnerable communities, primarily regarding the protection of the rights of the Serbs and other non-Albanians in the south of the province and the rights of returnees, as well as the process of reconciliation among communities. The negligible number of returnees is due to the failure to bring to justice offenders who have incited racial, ethnic and religious hatred and intolerance, ongoing institutional discrimination against Serbs, and ethnically motivated restriction measures, including arbitrary arrests. In particular, instances of arrests executed on the basis of trumped-up charges in the south of the province testify to the general physical and legal insecurity. Such measures seek to enable usurpers to take possession of property by illegal means.

The report of the Secretary-General should therefore accord attention in a separate section to the violation of human rights and freedoms of the returnees to southern Kosovo and Metohija. UNMIK must invest additional efforts in strengthening all its capacities in order to ensure the necessary level of protection of the human rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons, and to create optimum conditions for sustainable returns, including through the restitution of property or, put simply, the guarantee of property rights.

The report notes that no progress has been made with regard to the implementation of the ruling of the Kosovo Constitutional Court, confirming the ownership by the Visoki Dečani monastery of the surrounding land. The monastery, which features on the UNESCO World Heritage List, was founded in the first half of the fourteenth century by the Serbian King Stefan Dečanski. It has been vandalized many times in the past, including by adherents of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The report also draws attention to other disputes related to the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Those issues provide ample evidence of the importance of the protection of Serbian historical, cultural and religious heritage that is part of the invaluable heritage of Europe and the world.

The international community should also make additional efforts to establish a society in Kosovo and Metohija in which the rule of law is respected, in which conditions are created for effective, impartial and credible trials of war criminals, and in which the fate of missing persons is clarified, thereby contributing to the process of reconciliation among communities. As the legal framework for prosecuting perpetrators of war crimes in the Specialist Chambers has now been fully put in place, we expect that those suspected of carrying out crimes against Serbs and other non-Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija will be indicted and tried.

Serbia continues to be firmly committed to dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, facilitated by the European Union. Despite the many doubts, second-guessing and challenges encountered on the way, Serbia has demonstrated great resolve to find compromise solutions, which are not always simple or easy to come by. That constructive approach is evinced by the implementation by our side of a number of obligations assumed in the dialogue, including the recent integration of judges and prosecutors into the judicial framework of the province. Serbia's commitment to resolving all outstanding issues peacefully and through dialogue is motivated first and foremost by its strong conviction that there is no alternative to such an approach and that only within a status-neutral framework is it possible to contribute to regional peace, security and stability, as well as to the region's progress towards integration into the European family of nations.

Our responsible approach has also been reaffirmed by the bold political decision of the representatives of the Serbian list to enter Ramush Haradinaj's Government after the parliamentary elections. The decision once again confirmed the political unity of the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija and the perpetuation of the constructive policy of protecting their status and interests. Explaining their decision, the representatives stated that the conditions in which they decided to participate in the Government of Kosovo were very clear. They pointed to the need to protect the interests of Serbs and their central demands for the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities, the protection of property and the guaranteed return of IDPs.

Regrettably, the efforts made by Serbia to find realistic, status-neutral and mutually acceptable solutions through compromise have not been reciprocated by the other side, particularly with respect to implementing the agreements that have been reached thus far. Let me point out in that connection that, even four and a half years after the obligation to establish the community of Serbian municipalities was assumed as the key part of the first agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations, no progress has been registered in its implementation. Surprisingly, no mention is made of that fact in the report. For us, the establishment of the association/community of Serb-

majority municipalities is the most important question and a cornerstone of the protection of the interests of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija.

I take this opportunity to call on the representatives of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina to demonstrate goodwill and commitment to dialogue and to proceed to establish the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities without delay — in other words, to implement the obligations they have assumed and carry out the most important element of the Brussels agreements of 2013, which was signed by me in my capacity as Prime Minister of Serbia, by Catherine Ashton on behalf of the European Union, and by former Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi. This confirms the credibility of the statement made by Ramush Haradinaj, to the effect that there is no alternative to dialogue and that direct talks must occur between peoples and not the political elites.

The stalemate in the dialogue accounted for the emergence of a whole range of problems in the implementation of the agreements. Pristina continues to violate the provisions of the agreement on official visits and without a valid reason banned entry into Kosovo and Metohija to Serbia's Minister of Education, Science and Technological Development, Mr. Mladen Šarčević, and the Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija Marko Đurić. In addition, the problems in the sphere of freedom of movement and integrated border management continue. Internally displaced persons are treated inadequately by being requested to provide additional personal data, while their passports, issued by the Coordination Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia, are not recognized when they attempt to enter the province.

Motivated by a desire to find a lasting solution to the question of Kosovo and Metohija, the President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić has called on the citizens of Serbia to embark on an internal dialogue, which was institutionalized by the establishment of a working group. A long-term solution is a precondition of Serbia's progress and that of the entire region. We need a serious, responsible and forward-looking approach in our relations with Pristina, and we are ready to offer a soluton that would contribute to regional stability, political cooperation and economic prosperity. Rather than be a cause of new divisions, misunderstanding and conflicts, it will provide an opportunity for a historic agreement with the Albanian community of Kosovo and Metohija.

I therefore take this opportunity to call on Security Council members and Pristina's representatives to make a joint effort to focus on substantive issues and on the quest for a lasting and sustainable solution for Kosovo and Metohija rather than on technical aspects, such as the dynamic and format of Security Council meetings. Calls to change the long-standing modality of informing the Security Council and States Members of the United Nations about this important issue, at a time when we are trying to find a lasting solution for this problem, can only create new divisions within the Council and deepen the differences between Belgrade and Pristina. They counterintuitive and not conducive to the creation of a constructive atmosphere for the continuation of dialogue.

Serbia's efforts are aimed at protecting, in a legitimate way, its national and State interests and at asserting the authority of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and resolution 1244 (1999), which guarantee Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Any attempt to resolve any issue in Belgrade-Pristina relations unilaterally is unacceptable and may negatively affect the implementation of obligations assumed in the dialogue. In that context, I stress the disapproval of my country and of the international community of efforts to establish a Kosovo armed force. Such unilateral acts by Pristina are fraught with the potential to destabilize the security situation in the region and threaten the process of normalizing relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

At the same time, Pristina's efforts to promote its unilateral declaration of independence by applying for membership in international organizations and, by the same token, of politicizing their work have been denounced by many countries, including some that have recognized the unilateral declaration of independence. I take this opportunity to thank them for standing firm in the defence of international law in order to emphasize that the only right thing to do in this international context is to discourage Pristina from seeking admission to international organizations and to focus on a good-faith dialogue as the only way to resolve all issues. It is also worth mentioning in that connection that recent events have shown that States can and do backtrack and renounce their recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. Sao Tome and Principe and Suriname have proved that it is possible.

Before I conclude, let me take this opportunity to recall that Serbia has warned for the past 10 years of the danger of unilateral acts and drawn attention to the fact that recognition of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence may open a Pandora's box of many other separatist and secessionist movements around the world. Regrettably, we have seen this happen of late. Serbia condemns each and every attempt to declare independence unilaterally in the strongest terms and unequivocally supports the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States.

In conclusion, I express special thanks to States that have not recognized the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo for their principled position and their respect for resolution 1244 (1999) and the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Çitaku.

Ms. Çitaku: As always, I am honoured to be here in the Council on behalf of the Republic of Kosovo, although, I must admit, I fear we are not showing the Chamber the respect it deserves when we come here every three months, taking members' valuable time, to stage a theatre for purely domestic consumption. The intention is to somehow artificially instil the idea that the status of Kosovo is not resolved, and that Kosovo is akin to a war zone where minorities are expelled and persecuted.

That is simply not true. Furthermore, that is offensive not only to us Kosovars but, frankly speaking, to the United Nations and its agencies, which have put so much effort into reviving Kosovo in the immediate aftermath of the terrible war of 1999. Hundreds of thousands of refugees and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons returned to their homes to find everything in ashes. But we had much more than only hope and determination; we had the help of the United Nations, and for that we will be forever grateful. Therefore, for us, this Chamber is too important and too valuable to see it being misused in a projection of images that do not match reality. Our northern neighbour insists on projecting an alternative universe where time has not moved a second since the 1990s.

Kosovo is free and independent, and that will never change. A steep price was paid for it. On that cold day in February 2008, we knew that our struggles would continue and that there would be twists and turns. But the clock of history is not going backwards. Regardless of the difficulties, we will never give up our aspiration to make Kosovo an equal member of the family of the free nations of the world. We are not asking for shortcuts; we are just asking for fair treatment. We believe that it is fair to ask for the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to be redefined to match the reality on the ground.

UNMIK is not a peacekeeping mission. Kosovo is at peace and there is no conflict to be contained or civilians to be protected. UNMIK is not an administrative mission; Kosovo has its institutions. Did its mandate not expire more than a decade ago? Although the main purpose of the Council has been to maintain stability in Kosovo, the Council has not pronounced itself since 2008, when we gained our independence. Instead, it prefers to continue with routine reporting and keeps a Mission that reinvents its mandate without any real need, when we should be talking about downsizing and withdrawing the United Nations Mission in Kosovo in the light of the situation on the ground.

In less than six months, Kosovo organized both national and local elections. The turnout was especially high in the Serb-majority areas. The new Government, with Mr. Ramush Haradinaj as Prime Minister, was voted in on 9 September. It is important to note that according to international observers, both electoral processes met the highest international standards, with the exception of few Serb-majority areas where the local population was subjected to different kinds of pressure and intimidation to vote in a certain way. Often, Belgrade officials were responsible for such intimidations. In fact, I can say that the only Government that exercises pressure on the local Serbs is the one that sits in Belgrade.

Yes, there is discrimination against minorities in Kosovo, but it is of a positive nature. Kosovo institutions have gone to great lengths to accommodate the rights of non-majority communities. In today's Government, the Serbian community is represented by one Deputy Prime Minister, three Ministers and six Deputy Ministers. As the saying goes, we have put our money where our mouth is. Between 2008 and 2017 alone, the Kosovo Government has spent over €51 million for the repatriation and reintegration of minority communities in Kosovo; that is a public record.

However, I must reiterate that the claim that 200,000 Serbs were displaced from Kosovo after the war is factually incorrect. If that had been the case, there would be no single Serb living in Kosovo today.

According to the census organized in 1991 by the then-Yugoslav authorities, the number of Serbs living in Kosovo was 194,000. Unfortunately, to date we still do not know the accurate number of the Serbs living in Kosovo. That is because when the Kosovo institutions organized a census in 2011, the Government of Serbia unleashed a very aggressive campaign to discourage the participation of the Serb community. The smear campaign went so far as to label registration for the census as an act of betrayal. For us, it is not about numbers. Even if just one Kosovo Serb cannot return, that is one too many for us.

At the same time, we must also remember that not all Serbs that fled Kosovo after the war were actually citizens of Kosovo. When the war erupted in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, entire neighbourhoods were built in several locations in Kosovo to accommodate Serbs who used to live in those parts of the former Yugoslavia. Some decided to stay in Kosovo, as was the case of the Marević family, which came to Kosovo in July 1995. One member of that family was a minister of the local Government in the previous Government of the Republic of Kosovo.

In addition, in line with our Constitution, dual citizenship is allowed. Kosovo Serbs who are also citizens of Serbia have a constitutional right to vote in the Serbian parliamentary and presidential elections. In the absence of a Serbian embassy in Kosovo, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission administers the process. According to data from the last two rounds of elections, 106,094 voters in Kosovo were eligible to vote. Obviously, the numbers do not match up. Either the Serbian Election Commission inflated the number of Serbian voters in Kosovo or the number of Serbian displaced persons is inflated. We will get the full picture only when we organize the next census, and we will spare no effort to create better living conditions for all Serbs who decide to return.

It is regrettable that at a time when we should be concluding the dialogue with Serbia, its political representatives persist with their hatred and unacceptable declarations, followed by all sorts of attempts to rewrite history, including by choosing war criminals, such as General Ljubiša Dikovic, who committed war crimes in Kosovo, to teach cadets at the military academy. What is a man who is responsible and convicted for the death of thousands, including children, the rape of thousands of women and the deportation of hundreds of thousands going to teach young Serbians today? In the words of the Human Rights Watch official Fred Abrahams,

> "this is a dangerous refusal of the truth about the war. It is the same as if we were to appoint a thief to protect our banks".

Again, I do not mention this because I want to talk about the past; I am raising this point because I simply see no way to build peace and reconciliation if we deny the truth or bury it. Furthermore, if our neighbour declares victory because we are not able to join INTERPOL this year, it is not only wrong, but also irresponsible. We all know that the challenges we and the rest of the world face are borderless, and that they can be won only if we share information and work together. From terrorism to cyberthreats, we cannot win by excluding Kosovo and declaring that a victory. Quite the opposite is true.

Again, we are not giving up. I believe that Kosovo will soon secure its place within all the relevant international bodies, in coordination with our partners. That would not be a victory of Kosovo over Serbia; it would only be a just victory over the unjust, and the right and smart thing for the international community's investments for peace and stability in the region. The host country of this year's meeting of the INTERPOL General Assembly did not allow members of the Kosovo delegation to obtain visas, which was another unnecessary obstacle that our shaped final decision to withdraw our application this year.

Meanwhile, in Kosovo just yesterday, five members of the non-majority communities — Serbs — were promoted to higher officer ranks in the Kosovo security forces. As President Thaçi stated during the promotion ceremony, "once again the Kosovo security forces show that it is a force in the service of all citizens of Kosovo and in every corner of Kosovo". Kosovo's army will be exactly the same — a modern, defensive army that will reflect Kosovo's desire to join the Euro-Atlantic family. We will do our utmost to make that process as inclusive and consensual as possible, but no one will have veto power over it.

Furthermore, after many years of unnecessary delays, we can now say that Kosovo's Constitution and Kosovo's laws can now be applied throughout Kosovo's territory, since 40 new judges and 13 new prosecutors from northern Kosovo took an oath of office on 24 October. That is important not only in constitutional terms but because, after many years of being denied

justice, Serbs living in northern Kosovo will finally start receiving the services that they deserve from their own State.

I want to assure everyone here that Kosovo remains strongly committed to dialogue with Serbia, and I reaffirm that we will implement all the agreements reached in Brussels, in line with our Constitution. It is true that our electoral processes have caused us some delays, but our commitment remains. We know better than anyone what happens when we stop talking to each other, even if we disagree. However, we do not want a farce, or a process conducted merely for the sake of obtaining compliments or favours for anyone. We want a genuine process that will lead to the full normalization of relations between the two States.

I would like to add that Kosovo's independence is not a product of a secessionist movement but of the dissolution by consensus of the former Yugoslavia. We had borders long before we had statehood. Besides that, there was international intervention in Kosovo to stop ethnic cleansing. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission was deployed in Kosovo, and President Martti Ahtisaari was appointed by the Secretary-General to head a United Nations-led process, proposing an initially supervised independence for Kosovo. The International Court of Justice then issued a ruling clearly stating that Kosovo had not broken or violated any international law, and that its case was sui generis. Any attempt to draw a parallel between Kosovo and other situations around the globe will fail.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of our independence, we have a lot to be proud of. Just last week, for example, the World Bank announced that Kosovo is among the top 10 global economies displaying the most notable improvement in carrying out business reforms. Nonetheless, we are fully aware that we have much more to do in order to meet the rightful expectations of all people in Kosovo. They deserve better education, better health care and more opportunities to prosper. Our young people deserve that as they make us increasingly proud every day with their selfless dedication and accomplishments. With little or no institutional support, our young women and men are becoming shining examples and inspirations. They have taken Kosovo to the Olympics, bringing home gold medals from competitions ranging from mathematics to judo and raising our flag in places where politics still cannot land. We owe it to them and to future generations to leave behind a Kosovo that is not only at peace with itself but also prosperous and at peace with its neighbours. That is a dream worth fighting for.

The President: I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Kawamura (Japan): I would like to thank Mr. Tanin, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his informative briefing and continued service. I also appreciate the statements made by First Deputy Prime Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku.

As an Ambassador to the United Nations residing in New York, I have one important lesson in mind when attending any Security Council meeting, which is that we should conduct discussions based on the realities on the ground and, when appropriate, call for measures to be taken. The Council should always pay attention to developments on the ground. One such is that the local elections held throughout Kosovo were conducted in a fairly peaceful manner, including in areas with Serb majorities, despite some challenges, and that the new Government of Kosovo, formed in September, is embarking on a smooth political administration transition. Another is that Kosovo has long faced a number of challenges, including the need to create jobs, expand foreign direct investment, normalize relations with Serbia and demarcate its border with Montenegro. The Government therefore has no time to waste in squarely facing those challenges.

Another important reality is that the risk of violence in Kosovo is far lower than in other regions on our agenda, such as the Middle East and Africa. Since its establishment in 1999, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has greatly contributed to the development of self-governing democratic institutions and ensuring the conditions for peaceful and normal lives for the citizens of Kosovo. Today Kosovo has its own Constitution, democratic Government and parliament. UNMIK is undeniably a success story for the Security Council.

At the same time, the Council has the responsibility for determining UNMIK's future. The Mission must be reviewed so that we can assess which functions and mandates it alone can provide. We must address UNMIK's possible duplication of the rule-of-law activities of the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and consider a physical reduction of UNMIK personnel. In addition, an adjustment to the briefing cycle is long

overdue. A half-year cycle or longer is more than sufficient. Japan very much hopes that the Council will discuss UNMIK's future functions and make the necessary decisions calmly.

Of course, while almost 10 years have passed since Kosovo gained its independence, the realities in Kosovo are far from rosy. The crucial issues include reconciliation between Kosovo's Albanian and Serb communities, which is far from complete, and the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. In that connection, Japan welcomes the oath taken by Serb judges and prosecutors and their integration into Kosovo's justice system last month, in accordance with the agreement between the two leaders in the EU-facilitated dialogue in August. The Government of Kosovo must now accelerate the establishment of the long-awaited association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in order to honour the 2013 agreement on the subject with Serbia.

Regarding the relations between the two sides, Japan appreciates President Vučić's recent remarks on his commitment to a final resolution of the conflict, and we have taken note of the commencement last month of an internal dialogue. The environment for dialogue between the two sides on their status has been gradually improving, thanks in part to the call by President Thaçi of Kosovo for an internal dialogue as well. Japan hopes very much that with the assistance of the EU, the two sides will succeed in normalizing their relations in the near future through high-level, serious dialogue, while promoting tolerance and refraining from provocative ethnic rhetoric.

In conclusion, Japan is confident that Kosovo will achieve reconciliation among its ethnic groups under democratic governance, and sustained economic growth by exploiting its abundant natural resources and facilitating a predictable business environment. Japan fully supports Kosovo's efforts to that end, as well as its aspirations for European integration.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and the Ambassador of Kosovo for their briefings.

France welcomed Kosovo's formation of a new Government on 9 September in the wake of the legislative elections, which were held on 11 June and monitored by a large number of international observers. The establishment of new institutions is an essential step in enabling Kosovo — which France fully supports in both its national capacity and as a member of the European Union (EU) — to meet its challenges and the needs of the Kosovan people. The municipal elections are now taking place, and the first round, held on 22 October, was an overall success. We hope that the second round will also go well, free from attempts at intimidation, particularly in the Serbian municipalities, as the European Union Election Observation Mission has highlighted.

France supports the new Prime Minister's desire for reform, particularly in the area of economic development and its corollary of job creation, as well as improving health care and the education system. We also welcome the unanimous ratification on 4 October of the agreement between Kosovo and the European Union on the disbursement of financial assistance from the EU. Kosovo's political and economic institutions have been consolidated in recent years, and that significant progress, particularly on the security and economy fronts, is reason to continue adjusting the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and coordinating it with the other international stakeholders in Kosovo. Changing nothing is not acceptable, considering that it is our responsibility, as members of the Security Council, to ensure that United Nations resources are fully adapted to the situation on the ground. Kosovo no longer needs peacekeeping efforts per se, so we should therefore review how we are spending those resources.

France firmly believes that the future of Kosovo will be shaped by the political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina conducted under the auspices of the European Union, which has been very clear about this. For both Serbia and Kosovo, rapprochement with Europe is conditional on normalizing relations between the two countries. In that respect, it is important that the parties show good faith and a willingness to engage with each other at the highest level. The recent meetings of the Presidents of both countries convened by Ms. Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union, at which both sides emphasized their willingness to resume the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, are positive signs in that regard. We have also noted with interest the initiative of President Vučić to launch an internal dialogue on Kosovo in Serbia.

Beyond the declarations of intent, from now on we expect that all the agreements reached in 2013

and 2015 will be effectively implemented as soon as possible, so that meaningful progress can be made in fully normalizing relations between the two parties. In that regard, we welcome the integration of Serbian staff into Kosovo's judicial system that took place on 24 October. France fully supports the mediation efforts led by the European Union and its High Representative, Ms. Mogherini. We urge the Kosovo and Serbian authorities to step up their efforts to produce concrete results in that regard. Each side must do its part by adopting a constructive attitude and refraining from any provocations that could jeopardize the stability of the region. We also stress the importance of efforts to promote reconciliation and closer ties within and between communities.

In conclusion, further efforts to consolidate the rule of law in Kosovo must remain a priority. That is a particularly firm European demand and one that we support. Whether this issue is one of administrative capacity-building, justice or of combating corruption and organized crime, much remains to be done. Fighting radicalization in all its forms must also continue to be a priority. We therefore commend Kosovo's unconditional commitment to this issue, both at the local level and in the international coalition against Da'esh.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and we share his serious concerns about the status quo in Kosovo. We thank Special Representative Tanin and his team for their efforts and objective briefing on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which make it clear that there are persistent, deep-rooted problems in the province that require urgent resolution as well as monitoring by the international community.

We do not share Ms. Çitaku's optimistic, rosy assessments. Incidentally, I would like to let her know that while it is kind and even touching to hear her concerns about the time at our disposal, she need not worry about that. I would like to say to her that she does not need to worry about our time — the time of the Security Council — as we indeed do have much to say about what is going on in the province. Unfortunately, we have been compelled to conclude that the process of settling the situation in Kosovo has utterly stagnated. The dialogue between Belgrade and Kosovo under European Union (EU) auspices has essentially ceased to function. Despite the periodic meetings held in Brussels by the EU in which senior officials from both sides take part and which are intended to show that the format is still strong, no work is being done on substantive issues and there are no prospects of reviving the dialogue. It is telling that the executive structures in Pristina that previously provided technical support for the talks have been dismantled. We took note of the idea expressed by President Vučić of Serbia at the trilateral meeting in Brussels on 31 August with regard to launching a discussion of the long-term prospects for relations between Serbs and Albanians and ways to resolve them on a sustainable basis. We have heard no response to that initiative from either the Kosovo-Albanian side or the EU mediators.

We believe that the formation of a so-called Government in Kosovo in September is a clear illustration of the degree to which the situation has deteriorated and the extent of the radicalization in the province. The choice for the majority was between Ramush Haradinaj, who has been implicated in war crimes, and the ultranationalist Albin Kurti, who advocates the establishment of a greater Albania. That only emphasizes the fact that Kosovo is not only not a fully fledged State but that it is a source of instability with the potential to lead to a relapse into ethno-religious conflict in the Balkans and the collapse of the entire regional security system.

We are compelled to note the lack of progress in the relations between Belgrade and Pristina. The EU-led dialogue has for many months been at a conceptual dead end. Clearly, the parties view its essence and its ultimate aims in different ways. That is first of all the result of the biased mediation of Brussels, encouraging the Kosovo Albanian leadership to take hostile steps that are poisoning the atmosphere of the dialogue and undermining mutual trust. The European partners are playing into the hands of the Kosovo Albanians by attempting to shift the blame onto the Kosovo Serbs for the slow pace of implementation of the agreements that have been reached. However, a key item in those agreements is the one on establishing an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities, which Pristina has been cynically sabotaging since April 2013.

We trust that following the conclusion of the second round of municipal elections, scheduled for 19 November, the Kosovo Albanian authorities will no longer have any pretext for dragging their feet in dealing with these protracted issues. The pace of

the process of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to the province is as slow as ever, as is the work of clarifying the fate of missing persons. It is clear that individuals of non-Albanian ethnicity fear for their safety and see no possibility of resolving their property-related issues.

The oppression of the Serbian Orthodox Church persists. Despite the decisions of every Kosovo authority, including judicial ones, affirming the property rights of Visoki Dečani with respect to its adjacent land — which, I would like to recall here, is a UNESCO World Heritage site that is listed as threatened — the leadership of the municipality has not complied with them. What kind of trust can there be in Kosovan justice after that, especially given the backlog of court cases — approximately 350,000 — mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/911)? The fact is that the project known as the Republic of Kosovo is clearly not working.

Another area where no progress has been made is the investigation into the war crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army. It remains unclear when the Specialist Chambers in The Hague will begin to function. Nor should we forget that the basis for the establishing that court was the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr. Dick Marty, which accused certain present-day Kosovo Albanian politicians of involvement in the illegal trafficking of human organs and other extremely grave crimes. This is a very serious issue that a lot of people do not want to remember. All legal obstacles to the commencement of the court's work have been overcome, and we trust that initial charges will be brought shortly.

Another difficult topic concerns forcing the issue of the transformation of the Kosovo security forces into a full-fledged armed force, in spite of the positions of both Belgrade and the Kosovo Serbs, an idea that the authorities in Pristina have cherished for a number of years, with attempts being made to give it a pseudo-legal basis. In our view, the real issue is completely different. It is crucial to understand that in and of itself, this undertaking represents a breach of international law, since it runs counter to resolution 1244 (1999), which provided for the presence of a force in the province exclusively on the basis of a Council mandate, specifically the Kosovo Force, which is currently largely composed of NATO member State contingents. Moreover, such a step would be extremely reckless in terms of security both in the region and in Europe as a whole.

The presence in the Balkans of a new force component in the form of the so-called Kosovo armed forces would fly in the face of the Florence agreement, annexed to the Dayton agreement, designed to support regional stability with support from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It would seem that a military body not under the control of the country's authorities has appeared on the territory of one of the signatories to the Florence agreement, Serbia.

The importance of countering the proliferation of Islamic radicalism and terrorism in Kosovo is still extremely urgent. We are troubled by the fact that the province is being used for the recruitment of fighters involved in hostilities in the Middle East on the side of the extremists and for staging terrorist attacks in other countries. With respect to the rule of law and safety and security in Kosovo, we would draw the Council's attention to the guilty verdict recently handed down by a court in Skopje against a large group of Kosovars who participated in a terrorist raid in Kumanovo on 9 and 10 May 2015. We would note that questions about who in Kosovo was behind the attack and why the international presence was unable to prevent it, not to mention that questions about eliminating such hotbeds of tension remain unresolved.

We were dismayed by the claims from Pristina relating to the allegedly politicized verdict of the Macedonian court and assertions about monetary assistance to the families of the condemned. Given the upcoming rout of the Islamic State and the predicted return to the Balkans of a number of a foreign terrorist fighters to the region, including Kosovars, such an approach to counter-terrorism issues is, at the very least, ambiguous.

Despite the multitude of domestic issues it faces, Kosovo portrays itself as an active player on the national stage and is striving to join the greatest possible number of multilateral structures. We continue to consider that illegitimate, since from an international legal standpoint the province's representation at that level is through UNMIK. Moreover, the modalities for Kosovo's participation in regional bodies, through the so-called Kosovo asterisk formula, based on a footnote, have been established within the framework of the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. The European

Union, as a conscientious mediator, must ensure compliance with these resolutions in negotiations held pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/298, of September 2010.

The artificial nature of Kosovan statehood is reflected in the Republika Srpska's recent reference to the sovereignty of the Republic of Kosovo. This attests to a gradual acknowledgement of the damaging nature of decisions, often taken under external pressure, on the acknowledgement of the independence of territorial bodies that unilaterally secede in breach of international law. Under these conditions, we deem untimely and counterproductive talks about a reduction of staffing and budgetary parameters of UNMIK. The situation in the province is such that no decision of this sort can be taken, and, incidentally, it must be acknowledged that in essence the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina has been virtually non-existent.

For this reason, we must reject requirements to draw down or close the Mission. Instead we must commence constructive work in cooperation with this important United Nations operation. Let us recall that the Mission has been working with minimal resources. However, it plays a key role in Kosovo affairs and remains a critical tool for international oversight. It deals with issues relating to the normalization of the situation, in line with resolution 1244 (1999), which remains fully in force.

In the light of the aforementioned, we see no justification for any revision of the practice of quarterly reports to the Security Council about the situation in Kosovo. As has been reflected in today's discussion, this issue continues to require close international oversight and attention.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I want to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tanin, for his briefing and also express appreciation for the interventions this morning by First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Dačić, as well as by Ambassador Çitaku.

We welcome the formation, since the Council last considered this agenda item, of a new government in Kosovo. We now encourage all political actors, both inside and outside of the government, to engage in constructive dialogue and to continue implementation of the reforms necessary to strengthen the rule of law and the fight against corruption and to stimulate Kosovo's economic development and create employment opportunities.

We deem positive the fact that the first round of the municipal and mayoral elections in October was genuinely competitive and peaceful in most parts of Kosovo. However, we regret that there were cases of threatening behaviour and intimidation in certain Serb-majority municipalities in the run-up to the elections.

The future of both Serbia and Kosovo lies within the European Union (EU). In order to achieve their European perspective, the normalization of relations between the two countries is essential. Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are pivotal for a stable, peaceful and prosperous Western Balkans. In that regard, it is crucial that all political leaders in the region refrain from provocative actions and statements. It is essential that the status issue does not hamper Kosovo's European perspective or prevent its membership in international organizations. We welcome the resumption of the EU-facilitated dialogue, which provides an important contribution to the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Pristina and Belgrade must now intensify efforts to implement their respective parts of the agreements reached. In that regard, we welcome the recent integration of Serb judges into the Kosovo justice system as a most positive development. It is critical that parallel structures in Serb-majority areas be dismantled, and that the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities be established in a way that strengthens links between Kosovo-Serb citizens and the Pristina Government, and increases public trust in dialogue.

The United Nations and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo have made an invaluable contribution to the progress made in Kosovo since the end of the conflict. Building on that progress to establish a truly peaceful and prosperous Kosovo, including by engaging women and youth, will require the constant vigilance and unwavering commitment by all political leaders. The EU integration process, including through the support of European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, provides the framework to deal with remaining challenges. By continuing to work towards Kosovo's European perspective, Kosovo's leaders can deliver on the expectations of their people for a better future.

In that light, we remain interested in receiving Special Representative Tanin's views on possible

prospects of further downsizing the Mission's structure, size and tasks, as well as the possibility of adjusting the reporting and briefing period from three to six months, which is something we would support.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing and his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/911).

I also thank First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their statements, and the Italian presidency for convening this open meeting.

Uruguay advocates for the respect of the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia, as well as for compliance with resolution 1244 (1999). In the same vein, it advocates for political dialogue and constructive approaches that can lead to solutions that promote progress and stability in the region. As my delegation has indicated on previous occasions, I would like to point out that, as a country that has traditionally championed diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of disputes, Uruguay considers the European Union (EU)-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade essential. In that regard, we express our full support for that process.

With regard to the events of the past several months, we urge the political leaders to promptly resume the Belgrade-Pristina political dialogue and compliance with the agreements already reached. The dialogue's hiatus and delays in implementing international agreements are a source of tensions and distrust between the neighbouring countries. Moving forward the commitments already made will contribute to achieving stability at the international and national levels, and improving the living conditions and development of individuals so that they can reach their full potential. We firmly believe in the path that leads to reconciliation, and we way we must continue working in that direction. The renewal of the dialogue would be laudable.

I would like to dwell on several aspects related to human rights that we believe are essential to achieving reconciliation among the various communities living in Kosovar territory, namely, the protection of cultural property, mutual respect for the communities' differences and setting up conditions that will allow for the return of internally displaced persons.

Respect for the culture and religious beliefs of each community, as well as policies aimed at protecting minorities, are fundamental for achieving reconciliation and peaceful coexistence, and will contribute to the return of internally displaced persons who, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, numbered 16,418 as of September. Addressing the issue of internally displaced persons will be necessary so as to achieve post-conflict reconciliation. We appreciate the round table held in Geneva in August as a follow-up to the issue of missing persons. Progress must be made in that area as time and the age of those involved are working against achieving an outcome. The families of missing persons have the right to the truth and justice. It is an urgent and basic matter of humanitarian law.

Respect for each community, its culture and religious beliefs, as well as policies aimed at protecting minorities, are essential to consolidating peace. Truth, justice, reconciliation, security, equal rights, guarantees and inclusive processes constitute the foundation for sustainable peace. We appreciate the work that UNMIK is carrying out on the ground, the European Union as a facilitator of the dialogue, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as a cooperating partner, and acknowledge the work of all the relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for the clarity of his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/911). I would also like to welcome the presence of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ambassador Çitaku, to whose statements we have listened attentively.

My delegation welcomes the coordinated efforts of the various political parties which, with the support of the Kosovo Serb bloc in the Assembly, resulted in the election of an Assembly bureau and the establishment of a New Government, thereby ending the months-long political stalemate. Those developments, as well as the holding of free and transparent municipal elections with the wide participation of the Serbian municipalities in the north, represent, in our view,

significant and praiseworthy progress. We therefore encourage Kosovo's political stakeholders, on the one hand, to continue their work in maintaining a peaceful political climate, on which the effectiveness of the Belgrade-Pristina political dialogue largely depends, and, on the other hand, Serbian authorities to strengthen their commitment within a constructive and calm dialogue with Pristina.

Moreover, my delegation takes this opportunity to welcome the progress made thus far by the two parties in the framework of that dialogue under the auspices of the European Union (EU) to which they must fully commit in a constructive spirit, with the knowledge that it remains the only viable way to normalize relations.

In the judicial area, the integration and swearing-in of 40 judges and 13 Serbian prosecutors from northern Kosovo before President Thaçi, is contributing to bringing communities together and promoting peace. Equally encouraging was the high-level meeting organized by Ms. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, held in Brussels on 31 August, at which the Presidents of Serbia and Kosovo participated and committed to resuming the dialogue at the highest level under the auspices of the EU, while focusing on the implementation of agreements already concluded within that framework.

The issue of missing persons must remain a priority. It requires that the leaders of both parties show robust political will to provide families that have been waiting for a long time with answers.

I welcome the ongoing efforts of the security forces aimed at countering violent extremism in Kosovo as well as the constructive avities carried out within the framework of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), which contribute to strengthening the achievements made in the fields of defence, the rule of law, human rights, and the fight against terrorism and organized crime. Likewise, we welcome UNMIK's activities in promoting reconciliation, transitional justice, human rights and support for the process of normalizating relations between Belgrade and Pristina.

Senegal would like to reiterate its unreserved support for the joint United Nations-European Union programme to strengthen inter-community trust through the protection of cultural heritage. In that regard, we advocate for greater cooperation in terms of information exchange.

In conclusion, my delegation would like once again to pay merited tribute to the Special Representative of Secretary-General for his wise stewardship of UNMIK, while also expressing appreciation to the International Security Force in Kosovo, EULEX, the European Union itself, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for their valuable contributions to building a peaceful and prosperous society in Kosovo.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin for his briefing. I also wabt to thank Ambassador Çitaku and Minister Dačić for their participation.

We congratulate Kosovo on formulating a new Government following free, fair and peaceful democratic elections in June, which clearly demonstrates Kosovo's democratic maturity. We also welcome the successful local elections that Kosovo held on 22 October, which is further evidence of Kosovo's continuing progress. We urge Kosovo's newly elected leaders to use their mandates wisely to advance the welfare of all of Kosovo's communities and to maintain progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We also welcome recent advancements in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue with a successful integration of Kosovo Serb judges, prosecutors and administrative staff into the Kosovo judiciary.

We greatly appreciate the European Union's contributions as facilitator of the Brussels dialogue. We reiterate our support for the dialogue and encourage leaders in both Belgrade and Pristina to continue efforts to reach agreement on normalization.

As we have repeatedly said in this Chamber, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has long ago fulfilled its mandate in Kosovo. There is no doubt that over the years the Mission has successfully helped Kosovo build multi-ethnic democratic institutions that uphold the rule of law and respect human rights. The United Nations should be proud of these accomplishments and this success story.

But it is now time for the Mission to make a transition. United Nations resources must be directed towards more critical issues. In that regard, we firmly believe that the Security Council should consider UNMIK in a format that will allow us to discuss in detail proposals to improve the Mission and to bring its resources in line with any needs on the ground. The current format has not allowed us as a Council to seriously evaluate and assess the Mission and its future.

We also reiterate our call on the Council to adjust the reporting and briefing period for UNMIK. The Mission's reporting and briefing period should change from three months to six months or even longer.

During the last briefing, in August (see S/PV.8025), we recommended that, in his next report, the Secretary-General provide an assessment of possible budget and staff reductions with a focus on reducing redundancy (see S/PV.8025). We reiterate our recommendation for such a report.

Finally, we continue to strongly support full international recognition of Kosovo and Kosovo's membership in all relevant international organizations, including the United Nations and INTERPOL. We encourage States Members of the United Nations that have not yet done so to join the more than 110 United Nations Members that have already recognized Kosovo as an independent State.

Mr. Clay (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Tanin for his briefing. I would also like to welcome Deputy Prime Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku to the Security Council and thank both of them for their constructive statements this morning.

It has been three months since the Council last met to discuss the situation in Kosovo. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/911) makes clear, it is been a comparatively quiet period, one that does not warrant the Council's attention so soon after our last meeting on the subject (see S/PV.8025).

Since we last met, we have seen the welcome formation of a new Government and a National Assembly. As the United Kingdom's Minister of State for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan, made clear on his visit to Pristina the last week, the United Kingdom remains fully committed to working with Kosovo on a broad range of issues, including strengthening the rule of law, addressing weaknesses in the justice system and fighting organized crime. We also welcome the Government's commitments to addressing profoundly complicated legacy issues, including missing persons and sexual violence. Kosovo will have the United Kingdom's support in these efforts. We recognize that for Kosovo to look to the future, it must first come to terms with the past.

Over the past quarter, we have also seen broadly free and fair municipal elections across the vast majority of Kosovo, which is a welcome step following the free and fair elections in June. We were, however, concerned that the coordinated passive intimidation within Kosovo Serb majority areas directed against candidates competing against the Srpska list. This behaviour has no place in Kosovo or indeed any other country striving to join the European Union (EU).

This goal of membership in the EU is shared by both Serbia and Kosovo, and I would like to emphasize the need for normalization of relations between these two countries to help reach this goal. The EU-sponsored dialogue is an essential part of these efforts. Both parties have an equally important role to play in making the dialogue work, and I urge both parties in the Chamber today to redouble our efforts to implement dialogue agreements so as to reach their shared goal. Because it is Brussels and not the Security Council that is the forum of the future for Kosovo and Serbia, constructive exchanges in Brussels, such as those between Presidents Vučić and Thaçi, should echo louder than exchanges in this Chamber.

We of course welcome the years of service that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has provided in Kosovo, and we are grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for all of his efforts. But just as Kosovo must come to terms with the past, so must UNMIK. The United Nations needs to recognize that Kosovo today is not the same country as it was when UNMIK first arrived. Put simply, UNMIK's operating environment has changed and on current trend, will continue to keep changing for the better. We therefore need to see a full and effective transition from UNMIK to Kosovar institutions or other international organizations that have taken over historical UNMIK roles, including on missing persons. This is a time for UNMIK to be doing less, not more.

To aid this effort, we want to see a leaner, more efficient UNMIK, one with a stronger focus on established and agreed priorities. This is a call we have made numerous times alongside others in this Chamber, and we are disappointed not to see options for reconfiguring UNMIK presented in the latest report of the Secretary General.

I would like to close by reiterating the United Kingdom's long-standing position that is past time for the Security Council to meet less frequently on this issue. The number of issues on our agenda only

continues to grow. We must focus our time and attention on genuine threats to international peace and security. All of us in this Chamber should be thankful that the situation in Kosovo no longer falls into this category.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Ambassador Tanin, for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Kosovo. We also welcome the presence of the Serbian First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Dačić, and thank him for his statement. We also thank Ambassador Çitaku for her statement.

Our position on the issue at the hand has always been anchored in our commitment to contributing to peace between the parties. We reaffirm our support for the peaceful and amicable resolution of all outstanding issues between Belgrade and Pristina, in accordance with the Brussels Agreement.

We also welcome the ongoing efforts of the European Union in facilitating the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. We have been encouraged by the renewed commitment of the leaders of both sides in the reporting period to undertake a new phase of dialogue to normalize their relations. In that regard, we take note of the resumption of the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina at the presidential level in Brussels and in New York. We also welcome the agreement they reached on the final steps for the full implementation of the agreement on the judiciary.

Nonetheless, we understand from the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/911) that, despite progress in implementing the judiciary agreement, important gaps remain, and it is our hope that they will be filled soon — particularly the lack of progress on some of the key provisions of the EU-facilitated agreement, including, inter alia, on the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo, which continues to be a social concern.

It is our hope that the new leadership in both Belgrade and Pristina will continue to engage in dialogue and maintain the momentum in a positive and constructive spirit with a view to addressing outstanding issues and disagreements through peaceful means. That demands that both sides refrain from actions and statements that could cause ethnic discord and that they exert in-State efforts to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence conducive to dialogue.

Ethiopia fully supports the work that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been undertaking to discharge its mandates in line with resolution 1244 (1999). Its engagement with municipal authorities and community representatives in support of the efforts to protect the rights of communities and to promote inter-community reconciliation and trust-building is commendable, as are the efforts by Kosovo authorities to implement measures aimed at preventing violent extremism and radicalization by constructively engaging youth and women.

It is our hope that UNMIK will continue to promote political dialogue, strengthen community reconciliation and ensure security and stability in Kosovo and in the region. We also recognize the significant role of the European Union on matters concerning Kosovo, and we commend the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force for their valuable contributions in the areas of rule of law and security.

In conclusion, I wish to state that security and stability in Kosovo and the region will ultimately be ensured when there is political will and resolve from both parties. We once again encourage both to remain committed to dialogue and negotiation with a view to finding a mutually acceptable solution.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks Mr. Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, for his briefing. China welcomes Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, to the Chamber to addresses the Council. I also listened very carefully by the statement made by Ms. Çitaku.

Currently, the security situation in the Kosovo region is relatively stable, although complex factors remain. China welcomes the resumption of high-level dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina since August. We hope that the two sides will remain committed to the general direction of a political settlement, continue to implement existing agreements and gradually increase mutual trust so as to create favourable conditions for the final peaceful settlement of differences.

For ethnic communities in Kosovo, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence serve the fundamental interest of all and meet the need of Kosovo and countries in

the region to develop and prosper. China hopes that the relevant parties will always put the well-being of their people first, effectively protect the legitimate rights and interests of all communities in Kosovo, refrain from actions and rhetoric that might escalate the situation and safeguard the peace, development and stability of the Balkans.

Resolution 1244 (1999) provides an important legal foundation for resolving the question of Kosovo. All parties should observe the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and seek, through dialogue and negotiations, a solution that is acceptable to all parties within the framework of relevant Security Council resolutions. China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia. We understand the country's legitimate concern on the question of Kosovo and commend its efforts to strive for a political settlement. The Security Council should maintain its attention on the question of Kosovo and remain committed to promoting its proper settlement.

China supports the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), under the leadership of Special Representative Tanin, in discharging its duties in accordance with its mandates and working together with all parties constructively. We hope that UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo Force will work together in close collaboration to play a constructive and positive role in helping to gradually improve the situation on the ground and achieve early settlement of the Kosovo issue.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his informative briefing. We also thank the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Ambassador Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their statements.

Bolivia reiterates its call for compliance with resolution 1244 (1999), including full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Serbia. In that understanding, and in accordance with that resolution, Bolivia believes it important that the parties abide by the commitments entered into during the negotiations held under the auspices of the European Union. We urge them to work within that framework towards a peaceful solution through dialogue and in compliance with the obligation to negotiate, in line with the provisions of international law.

In that connection, Bolivia encourages the parties to comply with the provisions set out over four years ago in the Brussels Agreement on the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in order to ensure that the security and human rights of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija are upheld. We ask the Special Representative to report on the progress of that agreement, which we consider essential to achieve a peaceful long-term settlement.

Bolivia appreciates the efforts made by the European Union and commends the mediation efforts of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to get the the parties to agree on the final steps for the full implementation of the judicial agreement, which demonstrates willingness to move forward in the implementation of existing agreements. In that way, the dialogue facilitated by the European Union is conducive to fostering mutual trust between the parties.

We also commend the initiative of President Vučić of Serbia to launch an internal dialogue on the question of Kosovo. Likewise, we commend and recognize his efforts to coordinate the institutionalization of the dialogue process and to form a working group comprising members of the Government, the opposition, civil society and religious institutions.

Bolivia appreciates the work carried out by UNMIK, in line with its mandate in the framework of resolution 1244 (1999). We encourage them to continue working to build trust between the parties, make use of their good offices to mitigate tensions, use peaceful means to seek mutually acceptable solutions and promote political dialogue and respect for human rights in safeguarding peace, in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

Bolivia praises the work of UNMIK, which it continues through collaboration with the municipal authorities and the representatives of the community of Kosovo to protect the rights of communities, promote intercommunity reconciliation, create confidence-building measures and facilitate the return of internally displaced persons. We also hail their efforts to encourage the adoption of normative regulations for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In that connection, Bolivia welcomes the

convening of the conference financed by UNMIK on the difficulties of identifying human remains, as well as the production of the documentary *Something Still Missing* to commemorate the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.

We praise the Secretary-General's establishment of a trust fund to carry out community assistance projects to benefit the minority communities of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian peoples who were victims of lead poisoning as a result of their transfer to camps for internally displaced persons in northern Kosovo. We encourage Member States to contribute to that fund.

Finally, we urge political leaders to exercise prudence in their public statements regarding the special court for Kosovo — the Kosovo Specialist Chambers — and to refrain from making statements that contain bellicose or inflammatory rhetoric. Bolivia considers the rule of law and its impartial application essential to combat impunity. Those responsible for committing war crimes must take responsibility for their actions, regardless of their condition. The victims deserve justice.

Mr. Fesko (Ukraine): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his briefing. I am also grateful to His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their briefings.

I am pleased to underline that the overall security situation in Kosovo during the reporting period remained stable and that Kosovo's institutions managed to maintain a peaceful environment in a complex political landscape. We also witnessed some progress in the normalization of the relations between Belgrade and Pristina, due to the continuous efforts of the European Union (EU) to intensify the political dialogue between the parties. That means that despite a number of existing challenges, Belgrade and Pristina are moving in the right direction and taking important steps to strengthen peace and stability in the region.

It also proves that we need to resume discussions on the role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in the current circumstances and on actions by the Security Council that are needed to advance political dialogue, achieve long-due reconciliation and rebuild trust between communities. In the light of the general trend at present, Ukraine supports the idea of extending the reporting period to six months or even longer, as well as considering potential options for downsizing the structure, size and tasks of UNMIK. We are sure that United Nations resources thus freed up could be put to better use elsewhere.

We are confident that present challenges could be successfully met within the EU integration process through the active involvement of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the International Security Force in Kosovo and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. With that in mind, we think it is the right time to conduct a review of UNMIK in order to provide the Council with options on how to improve the Mission's efficiency.

We welcome the latest statements by President Vučić on beginning a new phase of internal dialogue, the outcome of which would define the relations between Serbia and Kosovo. We hope that that step will be translated into actions, leading to the complete normalization of relations. Ukraine commends the readiness of the sides to intensify efforts to implement existing agreements.

In our view, fulfilment of the agreement on the establishment of the Association of Serb-majority municipalities, the agreement on the freedom of movement across Mitrovica and the agreement on energy should be among the top priorities. We highly value the role of the EU in the process of normalizing relations and its assistance in implementing the European reform agenda. Despite some problems in the latter area during the reporting period, we welcome the informal consultations at the highest level conducted here in New York and in Brussels. Continued efforts in the direction of full implementation of the judiciary agreement also deserve our attention.

Next month, Ukraine finishes its term as an elected member of the Council, and this is likely to be our final statement on this issue. I would like to take this opportunity to once again underline that Ukraine remains fully committed to the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina and the intensification of cooperation between them on the path towards European integration, which is the real key to their long-term stability.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I would like to thank Mr. Zahir Tanin for his update on recent developments. We also thank First Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Ms. Çitaku for their informative briefings.

We fully support the efforts of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in achieving peace and stability in Kosovo. We welcome UNMIK's facilitating role in promoting dialogue between the parties. My delegation also commends the European Union (EU) leadership for successfully hosting a high-level meeting between the two parties in Brussels on 31 August, as well as on the margins of the General Assembly in New York in September. It was very promising that both sides agreed to conclude steps to implement the judiciary agreement, aiming to integrate judges and prosecutors from the Serb-dominated north into the Kosovo judiciary. We also see constructive measures taken to implement other existing agreements between Belgrade and Pristina. It is good news that on 21 October, 40 judges and 13 prosecutors from the Serb-dominated north were integrated into the judicial system in Kosovo.

Kazakhstan welcomes the recent decision by Belgrade and Pristina to institutionalize their dialogue process with the engagement of representatives of the Government, opposition, civil society, the media and religious organizations. For that to succeed, all interested parties must boost and encourage steps that promote the deliberations of the peoples of Serbia and Kosovo and convince the local population in Kosovo to accept their outcomes.

It is crucial to communicate with the parties and communities, accurately and in detail, the types of economic benefits gained by the local population in Kosovo. Residents need to know that dialogue is the only way to bring about good governance, the rule of law and human rights, as well as to solve the problems of unemployment, corruption, organized crime, education and health care, among others. All such outreach activities will assist in gaining much-needed support.

It is very important that any discussions that follow on the agreement on the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb-majority municipalities should be inclusive, with the close and active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, first of all the EU and the United Nations. The situation in Kosovo requires the continued attention of the Security Council. There are still a number of complex and sensitive issues, such as a lack of intercommunity trust, a large number of missing persons and implementation of a law on the use of languages.

Equally and crucially important is the protection of vulnerable groups and the cultural heritage in Kosovo. Fully implementing the languages laws to protect the non-majority communities is crucial to ensure equal rights and preserve the cultural diversity and heritage of both Kosovo and Serbia. Special attention must be paid to implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, by addressing the issue of conflict-related sexual violence. In that regard, we call on the authorities of Kosovo to withdraw their decision to shorten the deadline for the verification of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and we ask that victims be economically reintegrated, socially empowered and psychologically supported.

The issue of returning refugees and displaced persons, as well as their resettlement, will also have to be addressed. With such a rapidly growing young population in Kosovo, there is also a need to implement resolution 2250 (2015), on youth and peace and security, and to provide full support for the laudable engagement of young people of all ethnicities in order to promote reconciliation. Therefore, progress in the normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo remains crucially important to both sides, as well as to the European Union and the Western Balkans as a whole.

Finally, stability will be achieved only if the parties follow agreements that avoid nationalist and provocative rhetoric and focus on promoting intercommunity reconciliation and mediation, as well as following the path of trust, confidence-building measures, peacebuilding and conflict-prevention in Kosovo.

Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, Mr. Zahir Tanin, for his comprehensive briefing on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We wish him every success. We also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Ms. Vlora Çitaku for their statements.

Egypt welcomes the significant political developments in Kosovo, including the election of the Speaker of Parliament and the establishment of a new Government, which has ended the impasse in the country since the legislative elections in June. Egypt calls on the new

Government to continue to build on the reform efforts and the progress achieved in many areas, among them the rule of law and economic development, by adopting policies that will generate employment and improve the investment climate in the country.

Egypt hopes that the Government will begin to consider a number of urgent issues, including border demarcation with Montenegro, the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina and matters related to strengthening integration into European institutions, all of which will have a positive impact on peace and security not only in Kosovo but in the entire Western Balkans region.

We welcome the continuing dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina at the presidential level in Brussels and on the margins of the high-level general debate of the General Assembly. Egypt reaffirms the fact that high-level and European Union-facilitated talks between the two parties remain the most appropriate way to resolve all pending issues peacefully. In that regard, we commend the mention in the report (S/2017/911) of the two principal parties' increasing acknowledgement of the importance of strengthening dialogue. We welcome the agreement resulting from the consultations in Brussels on 31 August on the most recent measures for implementing the justice agreement. We call for the full and immediate implementation of that agreement and all previous agreements reached between 2013 and 2015 without delay.

Egypt has consistently called for abstention from inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech, which further fuels internal strife. We have therefore urged both parties to show the utmost restraint and avoid any unilateral initiatives that may heighten tension. The broad participation of Kosovo Serbs in the recent elections therefore gives us grounds for optimism and increases the possibility of their involvement in the political processes.

In conclusion, we are convinced of the need for Belgrade and Pristina to build on their joint initiatives in order to overcome their differences and agree on consensus-based, fair and lasting solutions for peace and stability in the region and the peaceful coexistence of all parts of society. We also believe that regional integration into European institutions should be expedited in order to ensure its positive impact on the stability of Kosovo and the region.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Italy.

I would first of all like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zahir Tanin for his briefing and Minister Dačić and Ambassador Çitaku for their constructive statements.

Italy is bound by long-standing ties of friendship with Kosovo and Serbia and is also a long-standing supporter of the path that the Western Balkan countries have chosen towards the European Union. European integration is the key to the long-lasting peace and development of the entire region. Italy will continue to promote regional integration, building on the outcomes of the Western Balkans Summit held in Trieste in July under our presidency of the Berlin process.

The normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina remains crucial. We commend Belgrade and Pristina for resuming the dialogue facilitated by the European Union at the presidential level and welcome their resolve to open a new phase of that dialogue. We call on both parties to take advantage of that window of opportunity to move steadily towards normalizing their relations. We also welcome the decision of the President of Serbia to open an internal dialogue with the aim of defining an overall, comprehensive and widely shared policy on Kosovo by involving all potential stakeholders. We welcome the formation of a new Government in Pristina and look forward to the free and fair conduct of the run-off municipal elections on 19 November.

We call on the new Government to intensify its efforts to move forward with the reforms that the country so greatly needs. The most urgent measures to be taken include the ratification of the agreement on border demarcation with Montenegro and the implementation of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities. The rule of law, justice and the fight against corruption should also remain high on the Government's agenda. We also underscore the importance for all parties to ensure full cooperation with the Specialist Chambers. We commend and support the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and we affirm our contribution to the Kosovo Force.

Being aware of the many challenges that are still to be tackled, while taking into account the progress made in recent years, Italy will continue to assist Kosovo. In

that perspective, we stand ready to discuss a way forward for the United Nations presence in the country, which should be adjusted to the current needs in coordination with the other international actors involved and in line with the wider review of peacekeeping operations. We therefore look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations in that regard. We are also open to extending this reporting period in line with the evolution of the situation on the ground.

In conclusion, I call on both parties to refrain from rhetoric rooted in the past and to focus their energy and attention on the future of the relationship. Both at the international and bilateral levels and as a member of the European Union, Italy will continue to do its part to facilitate dialogue and to build mutual trust.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8101

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8101 st meeting

Wednesday, 15 November 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ilnichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

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17-38367 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of South Sudan and the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/951, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2386 (2017).

I now give the floor to those membes of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): We appreciate the successful work of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) in stabilizing Abyei. The mission's efforts in working with local communities to strengthen ties, resolve disputes and increase stability have greatly contributed to the general calm in that contested area between the Sudan and South Sudan. We commend Ethiopia for its contributions to UNISFA and for successfully achieving the mission's core mandate — the stabilization of the Abyei Area.

Since 2011, however, the Sudan and South Sudan have made little concrete progress on implementing their agreements related to Abyei and the border. As a result, UNISFA has been regularly prevented from fully implementing its mandate, particularly with respect to supporting the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), which has not functioned as intended for almost six years.

When the Security Council unanimously renewed the UNISFA mandate in May 2017 under resolution 2352 (2017), the Council gave the parties a final six months to show their commitment to fully operationalizing the Border Monitoring Mechanism. While we continue to support the JBVMM concept, the Security Council cannot continue to support and resource a mechanism that the parties themselves do not expeditiously take tangible steps to implement.

The parties agreed to take several important steps in that regard at the extraordinary session of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, held on 14 and 15 May. We acknowledge that there has been limited progress in completing those steps, such as by authorizing UNISFA to use the helipad at Gok Machar and conducting aerial reconnaissance patrols to establish JBVMM team sites. We note that a meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism was held on 31 October, at which it reaffirmed the parties' commitments. It is unfortunate, however, that it took more than five months for that meeting to take place, especially considering the deadline the Council had given.

In addition, we remain seriously concerned about reports that armed forces continue to occupy areas within the agreed Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and that Sudanese armed police still surround the Diffra oil complex. These actions are inconsistent with the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, of 20 June 2011, as well as with several Security Council resolutions.

In consulation with regional and international partners, and in view of the mixed results since the Council last renewed UNISFA, we support resolution 2386 (2017), renewing the overall mission mandate for another six months, while giving the parties a final four months to complete the steps to which they have previously agreed with respect to fully implementing the JBVMM.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2386 (2017), extending the

mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) for another six months. We thank the United States, as the penholder, for facilitating the negotiations on the resolution, as well as for the flexibility shown in order to achieve the necessary consensus.We also thank all members of the Security Council for their support.

No doubt, we would have liked to see the UNISFA mandate renewed as a whole, maintaining the integrity of the mission, especially given the fact that the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) and UNISFA are mutually reinforcing and that the former is in fact an integral part of UNISFA. What UNISFA has been able to achieve in maintaining peace and stability in the Abyei Area and in preventing confrontations along the border between the Sudan and South Sudan has much to do with the JBVMM. Of course, we understand that the Council resolved last time that the support UNISFA provides to the JBVMM would be withdrawn unless the parties took concrete steps to achieve the full operational capability of the Mechanism.

Over the past six months, we have witnessed some encouraging progress with regard to the JBVMM, but we also recognize that what has been done falls far short of what the parties have agreed to carry out in the benchmarks they have set for themselves. We expect the parties to build on the positive momentum gained by the meeting of the two Presidents in late October in Khartoum. The continued support of UNISFA to the JBVMM directly depends on the achievement of the benchmarks set forth in the resolution the Council has just adopted. The parties certainly bear the primary responsibility in that regard, and we are hopeful that they will live up to their commitments.

Finally, it is absolutely critical that the two parties take advantage of what UNISFA has been able to accomplish in the maintenance of peace and stability in the Abyei Area and beyond to address some of the most important outstanding issues. We call on both parties to engage continuously and constructively in swiftly implementing the various agreements they have concluded, including the formation of the joint interim institutions that were supposed to be put in place pending the final resolution of the Abyei issue.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of France, for his able leadership of the Council's work last month.

I further thank the Security Council for the spirit of cooperation and consensus that allowed it to adopt resolution 2386 (2017), extending the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) for six months. We also thank the delegation of the United States of America for its efforts in drafting resolution 2386 (2017), and I reiterate my country's commitment to cooperating with UNISFA in the implementation of its mandate under resolution 1990 (2011).

We confirm that security and stability in Abyei today and the remarkable progress that has been made towards establishing peaceful coexistence between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka there, as confirmed by the reports submitted to the Security Council recently, are the direct result of the joint efforts of the Government and the community, together with the positive role played by UNISFA since its establishment.

My delegation affirms that the Sudan was never behind the suspension of the work of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), the obstruction of its movements, or the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the September 2012 Cooperation Agreement between the Sudan and South Sudan. We believe that the Mechanism is necessary to sustaining peace along the border between the two countries and the full normalization of relations between them. That opinion is shared by many regional and international partners, foremost amongst whom is Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, as indicated in his letter to the Secretary-General of 23 October 2017. It is therefore difficult to find any justification for ending support for its operations.

We also reiterate the commitment of the Government of the Sudan to the implementation of the decisions of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, as confirmed at the 31 October meeting in Khartoum, particularly with respect to the operationalization of the JBVMM, the establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, and the implementation of the first phase of the border-crossing initiative and the implementation of

the decisions of previous meetings of that mechanism. We hope that the decisions arising from the visit of President Salva Kiir to Khartoum on 1 and 2 November will mark the beginning of the full normalization of relations between the two countries and of addressing all concerns, in particular those related to security.

We affirm our complete commitment to all agreements signed with the Republic of South Sudan, starting with the 2004 Abyei Protocol; the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on temporary arrangements for the administration and security of the Abyei Area, of 20 June 2011; and the Cooperation Agreement of 27 September 2012. We call on our brothers and sisters in the Government of South Sudan to engage positively and seriously with the Government of the Sudan and the African Union in accelerating the establishment of the Abyei institutions foreseen in the June 2011 Agreement, including the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council and the Abyei Police Service.

Council members will no doubt agree that those institutions are critical to adminstering the Area, providing the necessary services to its inhabitants, promoting peaceful coexistence among its various societal components, and allowing for a final settlement of the status of Abyei in a manner that is acceptable to all and meets the expectations of all stakeholders. Needless to say, the adoption of resolution 2386 (2017) today clearly demonstrates that developments and events have not superseded the Cooperation Agreement on security arrangements or its provisions concerning the Abyei Area Administration, the Abyei Area Council and the Abyei Police Service, as claimed by my brother, the representative of South Sudan, at the latest meeting, held on 26 October.

With respect to the deployment of a police unit to secure the Diffra oil facilities, as mentioned by the representative of the United States, my delegation confirms that its presence is necessitated by the fact that the Abyei Police Service has yet to be established and by the existence of rebel movements in South Sudan that may target those vital installations, as they did in 2012 during the occupation and sabotage of the Heglig oil field, near Abyei. My delegation is of the *view that we must address* the matter by finalizing the establishment of the police force, which is a pillar of the June 2011 agreement. Once we do, there will there be no justification for the deployment of the Diffra police unit.

I should like to reiterate our gratitude and thanks to all our partners whose efforts have facilitated UNISFA's work, in particular the Government of Ethiopia, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, the AU High-Level Implementation Panel, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan, and all personnel affiliated with UNISFA. We also reiterate the Sudan's commitment to cooperating with UNISFA in fulfilling all its mandated tasks smoothly under resolution 1990 (2011) and subsequent resolutions.

In conclusion, Council members may rest assured that since last May only one goal has spurred us to make every effort to retain UNISFA and its subsidiary mechanisms, including the JBVMM, in Abyei. That goal is to maintain the current peace until we arrive at a final settlement on the status of the Sudanese region of Abyei. Our tireless efforts to end all manifestations of conflict south and west of our territory arise from our desire to eliminate all forms of friction, confrontation and violence. That is our only motive for coordination with South Sudan regarding Abyei, as evinced by the joint letter sent by our respective Foreign Ministers to the Council and the Secretary-General, andthe subsequent steps taken, including the recent meeting of Joint Political Committee in Khartoum, as well as the operationalization of the various related mechanisms, alongside the several communications with all members of the Council, without exception.

We call on the Security Council today to support us in maintaining that momentum. Blessed are those who pave the way to peace and support it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

Mr. Malwal (South Sudan): Allow me at the onset to congratulate you, Sir, upon your assumption of your duties as President of the Security Council for the month of November. I assure you of our delegation's support and cooperation.

I would also like to extend the appreciation of our delegation to the members of the Security Council for the effort and time they put into negotiating the text of resolution 2386 (2017), adopted today, and welcome the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Our appreciation

also goes to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for its tireless assistance to UNISFA in the fulfilment of its mandate.

Lastly, I would like to pay tribute to the men and women of the Ethiopian armed forces, who have demonstrated their dedication to the people of Abyei despite the challenges they are facing.

This extension comes at the time when the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of the Sudan, through their leaderships, have renewed their resolve to solve any outstanding differences within the agreed established channeled.

In conclusion, it is our hope that through the extension of this mandate, the people of Abyei will enjoy greater peace and security as a permanent settlement is sought under the auspices of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8102

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8102nd meeting
Wednesday, 15 November 2017, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ilitchev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2017/865)

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17-38355 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2017/865)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/957, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/865, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2387 (2017).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2387 (2017), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). In a context where the security and humanitarian situation has been deteriorating and taking a heavy toll on the civilian population, Blue Helmets and humanitarian workers alike, we welcome the fact that through it the Security Council is demonstrating its full and steadfast support both to MINUSCA and the Central African Republic authorities.

Before the negotiations that concluded today, France had asserted that the Security Council could not afford to take the risk of allowing the Central African Republic to relapse into a crisis as tragic as the one that it endured from the end of 2012 to the beginning of 2014. On the contrary, we believed that the Council had to put its full weight behind halting the spiral of violence and recreate positive momentum in the country. That is the thrust of the important resolution that France proposed and we have just adopted. I would like to stress three points concerning it.

First, the resolution delivers support for MINUSCA that we hope will be decisive, with an increase in the troop ceiling of 900 military personnel that everyone has been waiting for and that will provide MINUSCA with more resources and greater flexibility, enabling it to improve its ability to deliver on its mandate to protect civilians. MINUSCA has already shown that when necessary it can act proactively and robustly to protect civilian populations, especially women and children, who are particularly vulnerable, against the threat of armed groups. We hope that MINUSCA will be able to continue those efforts within the framework of the new resolution and therefore with a strengthened capacity.

With regard to the protection of civilians, we would also like to revisit the importance of effectively combating cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and to reiterate our full support for the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy and for the voluntary compact arrived at between the United Nations and Member States. In that regard, today's resolution encourages both the United Nations and troop- and police-contributing countries to build on and consolidate the work already undertaken to prevent such abuses, and to ensure that the perpetrators are not left unpunished.

Secondly, at the request of the Secretary-General, the resolution also enables MINUSCA to prioritize its mandate better by focusing on the critical challenges of peacekeeping, which are the protection of civilians, which I just talked about; support for the peace and reconciliation process under the leadership of the Central African Republic authorities and jointly with the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation; and the delivery of humanitarian aid. The prioritization

of the mandate will be accompanied by improved sequencing of various other of MINUSCA's tasks so as to enable the Mission to fulfil its mandate as efficiently as possible.

Thirdly, the resolution is a first step in the support that MINUSCA can give to the gradual and controlled redeployment of the Central African armed forces, trained by the European Union Training Mission-Central African Republic, with a view to their long-term re-establishment. The Secretary-General's recommendations, which we expect to see by May, will be very useful for that. This is a critical issue, because it is through that support to the redeployment of the Central African internal security forces that the Security Council can affirm its support to the Central African Government in implementing its strategy for restoring the State's authority throughout its territory.

France, as the penholder for the Central African Republic dossier, would like to once again thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Mr. Parfait Onanga, for their commitment to peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic. I also thank all the delegations of the Security Council for their work.

Of course, as we all know, the crisis in the Central African Republic cannot be solved by a security response alone and without resolute commitment on the part of all the stakeholders concerned. That is why the resolution reaffirms the Security Council's full support to President Touadera and encourages him to continue the efforts he has made so far to facilitate national reconciliation. It is also why it supports the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, with a view to reaching a comprehensive, inclusive political agreement that does not ignore any issues, including the fight against impunity.

Despite the difficulties that we are all aware of, together we can succeed in the Central African Republic if we remain focused on working to achieve lasting peace there. That is the thrust of today's resolution, which must now be implemented in full.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt welcomes the Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2387 (2017), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). It affirms the important role of a Mission that continues to represent the core contribution of the United Nations to maintaining stability and peace in the Central African Republic, particularly in the light of the increasing challenges in the country and the deterioration of the security situation owing to increasing sectarian and religious violence. Clashes involving armed groups are also posing an increasing threat to civilians, MINUSCA troops and humanitarian workers.

Egypt therefore welcomes the fact that the Mission's mandate focuses on a number of priority tasks, notably support to the political and reconciliation process. We are especially pleased that the resolution requires the Mission to work in partnership with the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in support of the political efforts of the African Union and the relevant subregional organizations. Egypt believes firmly that African efforts, with the support of the United Nations and international partners, represent the best way to reach a political settlement and comprehensive agreement in the Central African Republic. We are also pleased that the mandate focuses on the protection of civilians. The resolution provides for measures to increase MINUSCA's effectiveness and its ability to implement its mandate, including the fact that it specifies the latest increase in MINUSCA's troop numbers, which should enable it to deal more effectively with the security challenges across the country.

Egypt is one of the largest troop-contributors to MINUSCA and to peacekeeping operations in general. In our view, the way to increase the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions is through cooperation within a framework of triangular cooperation between the Security Council, as the organ mandated to approve the mandates of peacekeeping operations, the troop- and police-contributing countries, as the implementers of the mandates, and the Secretariat of the United Nations. We therefore emphasize the importance of addressing all issues relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of troops participating in peacekeeping operations within the framework of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly, as the appropriate platform for such matters. In that regard, Egypt welcomes the efforts of MINUSCA, in partnership with troop- and police-contributing countries, to address sexual exploitation and abuse, which has led to a significant reduction in the number of such cases, a fact recognized in resolution 2387 (2017). Egypt calls for continuing those efforts on the basis of General Assembly resolution 71/278, adopted by consensus, as it is the most comprehensive and

appropriate framework for promoting both efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping missions and the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy.

Achieving sustainable peace and stability in the Central African Republic requires establishing national institutions, including defence and security forces, so that the State can extend its control throughout the country. Deploying the Central African armed forces is a major step that MINUSCA should support in line with its mandate to restore the State's authority. We look forward to hearing the Secretary-General's proposals for that, in accordance with his report (S/2017/865). In that context, it is important to ensure that the Mission is provided with the resources it needs to fulfil its mandate, a responsibility that falls to all the Members of the United Nations, as stipulated in paragraph 37 of resolution 2387 (2017).

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Ambassador Delattre for France's efforts to ensure that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has the mandate to address the evolving situation in the Central African Republic. It has been a challenging year for MINUSCA, as evidenced by the 12 peacekeepers who lost their lives in the cause of peace. We want the peacekeepers to know that their efforts have not gone unnoticed. In particular, I would like to highlight MINUSCA's efforts to protect the thousands of internally displaced Muslims who were trapped on the grounds of a church in Bangassou.

MINUSCA remains focused on what we believe are core principles of peacekeeping. It has a clear exit strategy, the consent and full support of the Government of the Central African Republic and is making notable progress on its mandated tasks, including helping to advance a political solution. Today, the Security Council reaffirmed that it is invested in the peace and security of the Central African Republic, and we believe that MINUSCA is headed in the right direction. The United States considers each peacekeeping operation carefully to ensure that we have the most effective and efficient forces possible. In some cases, that has prompted us to call for a reconfiguration or reorientation of a mission. In the case of MINUSCA, we believe that additional capacity will give it the flexibility it needs to address emerging threats and fulfil its mandate to protect civilians.

However, simply adding troops will never be enough to guarantee success. As Ambassador Haley has noted previously, we should focus on the quality of troops deployed, not just their numbers. We must also be willing to address the Mission's shortcomings and take steps to improve troop performance. It took years for the peacekeepers to meet United Nations equipment standards, and numerous reports of sexual exploitation and abuse have long afflicted the Mission. We recognize that its leadership has confronted those obstacles head-on and is committed to having troops who meet the highest performance standards. Resolution 2387 (2017) outlines much stronger requirements for preventing and reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and for reporting on performance indicators, so as to enforce effectiveness more broadly.

The United States voted in favour of today's resolution because we remain committed to supporting focused and effective peacekeeping missions that are working tirelessly to execute their mandate, thereby creating the conditions for improving the lives of the people they have come to serve. We recognize that this purpose goes hand-in-hand with building the capacity of the Central African Republic Government, including its armed forces, police and gendarmerie, so that they may take on the role of primary security providers for the people of the Central African Republic. We hope that the Government and MINUSCA will continue to work together to ensure that the citizens of the Central African Republic experience the peace and prosperity that has long eluded them.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation endorsed the adoption of resolution 2387 (2017) on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic for one year. We were chiefly guided by the importance of sending the citizens of the Central African Republic a message that the international community will not abandon them during the difficult situation that the country finds itself in at the moment. The security situation is extremely worrying, and the Central African Republic State finds itself besieged as never before. In these circumstances, the Security Council cannot stand idly by.

We concurred with the Secretary-General's proposal for increasing the Mission's military component by 900 persons. However, we hope that peacekeepers will not spread their efforts too thin but rather focus on

carrying out their primary tasks — protecting civilians and advancing the political process. The fact is the Blue Helmets are not in a position to protect every citizen of a country that is the size of France. However, if their mobility is increased, as the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/865) emphasizes, they will be able to contribute significantly to alleviating tensions on the ground, which will enable Bangui to focus on the peace process and on implementing the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for former combatants. The Government of the Central African Republic should also continue rebuilding the capacity of its national armed forces.

In deploying additional peacekeepers as part of the Mission, we must not forget the contingents that are already deployed in the Central African Republic. They are carrying out difficult duties and risking their lives in doing so. The Secretary-General did not observe United Nations Day in the Central African Republic, alongside our peacekeepers, in vain.

We call for a balanced approach to assessing the contribution of troop-contributing countries. We cannot have situations created owing to the withdrawal of a whole contingent because of sexual crimes committed by individual peacekeepers when replacements cannot be found quickly, since that seriously interferes with the Mission's operational capacity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Kpatamango (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to address the Security Council in the place of my Ambassador.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Central African Republic, I would like to express my sincere thanks and renewed gratitude for the Council's sense of its responsibility in unanimously adopting resolution 2387 (2017), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA stated during his briefing on 6 November (S/PV.8084), the situation in the Central African Republic remains worrying. The increasing areas of tension and worsening armed violence over much of the Central African Republic's immense territory highlight the limits of MINUSCA's force. Adopting the resolution is a wise decision that should give the Mission and its Head more impetus to accomplish their difficult task in a continually evolving situation.

As the Secretary-General outlines in his report on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2017/865), our country is facing huge challenges. Only by strengthening MINUSCA's operational capacities will the force be able to deploy effectively. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Secretary-General who, in his customary wisdom, has called for an increase in MINUSCA's military personnel that the members of the Council have all agreed to. The recent surge in violence against civilians and United Nations troops has been a salutory reminder that only a policy of long-term development can break the current cycle of fragility.

Finally, I would like to thank all the delegations that contributed to drafting today's resolution, which will bring a new lease of life not only for MINUSCA and its Head but also for the Government and the people of the Central African Republic. Above all, I commend the Council for its commitment. The Central African Republic deserves a better future, and it will have it, thanks to the Security Council. As we seek to rebuild and restore peace with the help of our partners, the Council's support is more essential than ever.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8103

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8103rd meeting

Wednesday, 15 November 2017, 11 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Japan	Mr. Kawamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Ilnichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2017/907)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2017/907)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/907, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

Ms. Keita: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on the latest developments in Darfur. I will provide a brief update on the situation on the ground and on the efforts of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) to implement its mandate since the publication of the latest report of the Secretary-General of 27 October (S/2017/907). I will also touch upon the ongoing reconfiguration of UNAMID.

The political process aimed at reaching a settlement to the conflict through negotiations with the non-signatory parties to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur remains at an impasse. At the same time, armed clashes between the Government and those non-signatory parties have subsided, without any incidents during the reporting period. Meanwhile, the Government has begun the next stage of its disarmament campaign — the compulsory arms collection — in most parts of Darfur, for which it reportedly deployed approximately 10,000 Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to Darfur.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the process has brought to the surface tensions involving militia groups that are not part of Government forces. Confrontations between Government forces and militias were reported in Kass, South Darfur, and Kutum, North Darfur, on 21 and 23 October, respectively. On 10 November, Government forces supported by Antonov aircraft clashed with the militia group allied with Musa Hilal near Korma, North Darfur, resulting in an unconfirmed number of casualties on both sides. Government forces entered the Korma camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their search of the militias, but no one was found or arrested.

In Zalingei, Central Darfur, Government forces initiated house-to-house searches for weapons. They attempted to enter the UNICEF compound in search of weapons on 5 November, and local authorities have since been warned to avoid such incidents. In South Darfur, following demonstrations and clashes in the Kaima IDP camp, which resulted in the death of five IDPs. On 22 September, RSF in more than 100 gun-mounted and armoured vehicles blocked roads within the camp and detained one of the IDPs briefly on 2 November. Local authorities subsequently claimed that that operation was a reconnaissance mission and not part of the disarmament campaign.

Intercommunal violence also persists, particularly in connection with Arab nomadic herders, albeit with less intensity than in previous years. The number of intercommunal incidents has gradually decreased from 11 cases recorded from April to June as compared to 10 cases from June to August, and eight cases from August to October. The total number of casualties in 2017 thus far numbers 234, compared to nearly 2,000 in 2013. Nevertheless, there were two cases of intercommunal clashes in West Darfur in October. In one of the incidents, near Kulbus, on 17 October, Zaghawa and Rezeigat herders clashed over livestock, and eight Rezeigat and 15 Zaghawa were killed. In South Darfur, armed members of the Salamat tribe killed three Fallata, near Graida, on 24 October, and Fallata and Fur returnees were once again attacked by Arab nomads near Menawashei on 27 October, and five of them were killed.

In Sortony, North Darfur, tensions involving internally displaced persons, the Arab community, and the Sudan Liberation Army/Popular Defence (SLA/PD) continue. On 7 November, UNAMID prevented a group of armed Arabs allegedly looking for their livestock

from entering the IDP site. During the encounter, UNAMID observed armed SLA/PD elements assuming offensive positions in the mountains surrounding the camp. On 10 November, UNAMID once again intercepted a group of Arab nomads firing randomly in the outskirts of Sortony and claiming that their livestock had been stolen by SLA/PD elements hiding within the camp. They threatened to attack the IDP camp unless SLA/PD withdrew from the site.

It is evident that Darfur today is different from what it was like during UNAMID's initial deployment, given the overall level of improvement in terms of security. The armed groups have largely been defeated, and the ferocity of intercommunal violence has also decreased over the past year. No new large-scale displacement has taken place. However, those positive developments have not resulted in the voluntary and sustainable return of IDPs. Nearly one-third of the population in Darfur remains displaced. That reflects anxiety over security, uncertainty concerning the occupation of their land and the lack of confidence regarding their present and future prospects.

A key reason for that dilemma is the slow progress that has been made in addressing critical issues for the people of Darfur, such as land and other scarce-resource management, accountability and security sector reform. In that regard, the Government has been less than proactive in the implementation of the outstanding provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. The remaining commissions and the fund of the Doha Document remain inoperative and lack clear political guidance and funding from the Government, which is hampering efforts to address root causes.

UNAMID continues to do its utmost in the context of its fulfilling its mandate by working with local authorities and communities to promote grass-roots reconciliation and stabilization. In that context, it is equally important to augment the capacity of the United Nations country team to support longer-term peacebuilding-oriented activities. UNAMID and the country team have finalized the integrated strategic framework for 2017-2019, which sets out common priorities and the division of labour concerning three main themes: the rule of law and human rights, durable solutions, and peacebuilding for human security. The Secretariat is working with UNAMID and the country team to develop a joint financing strategy for the implementation of the framework to ensure that the drawdown of the peacekeeping mission is accompanied by adequate transitional support.

With the closure of 11 team sites and the accompanying reduction of military and police personnel, the civilian staffing structure has been reviewed and readjusted according to which the Mission budget for 2017-2018 was revised. Regarding the new two-pronged approach of UNAMID, the Mission is devising State-focused stabilization plans in cooperation with the United Nations country team, which will focus UNAMID's activities addressing the specific needs of the population in the five states. The Jebel Marra task force will become operational on 1 January, and its concept is being finalized at the moment.

In that connection, I regret to report that the allocation of land for a new team site in Golo remains pending, despite the intensive engagement with the Government in Central Darfur, Khartoum and here in New York. As Council members are aware, the establishment of a new team site in Golo for the Jebel Marra task force is an essential component underpinning the concept of the reconfiguration of UNAMID, and goes hand in hand with its withdrawal from the more stable parts of Darfur. Despite the efforts of the Sudanese Government to combat criminality, the arms collection campaign and the deployment of the Rapid Support Forces will require careful management in order to minimize security risks. A further escalation of tensions relating to disarmament could also affect the communal dynamics among the militias, their communities and other competing groups on the ground. The Doha Document for Peace in Darfur is one of the integral instruments for addressing such underlying communal tensions and issues. Its full implementation is an entry point for sustaining peace, as it touches on the causes and consequences of the decades-long conflict, including land, displacement and relationships with nomadic herders, among other things.

The level of cooperation between UNAMID and the Government of the Sudan has been positive overall, although challenges remain in terms of access restrictions and customs clearances at Port Sudan. The Government's commitment to complying with the status of forces agreement, which also applies to the allocation of land for a new team site in Golo, would be greatly appreciated. In conclusion, I would like to thank the Council for its continued support for the work of UNAMID.

The President: I would like to thank Ms. Keita for her comprehensive and interesting briefing.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/907), and to take this opportunity to congratulate her on her successful work.

Uruguay emphasizes the report's message that while there have been no open clashes between Sudanese Government forces and armed groups in recent months, the security and human rights situation in Darfur is still unstable. We should also point out that the principal remaining flashpoints continue to be intercommunal clashes and hostilities, despite the reconciliation efforts by the local authorities with the support of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations country team.

My delegation believes it is critical that the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements abide by their unilateral declarations on the cessation of hostilities and move on to the next steps in the peace process, facilitated by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel with support from the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan and the Joint Special Representative and Head of UNAMID. Progress in those areas would help to create the conditions needed to effectively address root causes of the conflict such as intercommunal conflicts and to safely return the more than 2 million internally displaced persons in Darfur to their homes.

We are pleased that UNAMID is moving ahead with the reconfiguration process, in accordance with the Council's decision in resolution 2363 (2017). We reiterate once again that the cooperation of the Sudanese Government with the Security Council and UNAMID is essential to the success of this transition. In that connection, I should acknowledge the Government's cooperation and support in the repatriation of uniformed units and the closure of operations bases. We call for finalizing the preparations for the establishment of a temporary operations base in Golo. We also note that the general environment in which UNAMID is operating has continued to show signs of improvement and that we have seen a drop in the crime rate and in restrictions on movement.

However, the Mission is still dealing with various logical challenges that continue to hamper its work, including delays in issuing visas, especially for human rights workers. We therefore urge the Government of the Sudan to step up its efforts to remove the remaining operational restrictions, fulfil all its obligations in that regard and maintain the positive spirit that characterized UNAMID's review process. Although the Mission is in a drawdown phase, we want to highlight the important and still necessary role that it plays in protecting civilians, for example by monitoring human rights violations, conducting daily patrols and supporting mediation in intercommunal conflicts.

In conclusion, I would like to express Uruguay's appreciation to all UNAMID personnel, the United Nations country team in the Sudan and the humanitarian workers who work tirelessly and often in difficult conditions to achieve sustainable peace in Darfur.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, for her presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (S/2017/907) and for the progress that has been made in implementing the recommendations established in the wake of the latest strategic review of UNAMID.

We want to highlight some of the positive aspects mentioned in the report, which we see as the result of the joint efforts of the African Union, the Government of the Sudan and the United Nations. In the first place, the fact that there were no clashes between the Sudanese Government and rebel groups in Darfur during this period is a major improvement, enabling the parties to focus their efforts on the political process, address the root causes of the conflict and promote development and peacebuilding in Darfur.

We appreciate the Government's efforts to promote the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. As we have frequently said, the only possible solution to the situation in Darfur is through a political process that can enable the parties to resolve their pending issues, especially disputes about land ownership and management, intercommunal conflicts, disarming the civilian population and the militia, and a permanent ceasefire. We must settle the differences regarding the Document and we call on the non-signatory parties to engage in constructive dialogue with the Government.

In that regard, we commend the initiatives taken by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, the Chairperson of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel tasked with implementing the recommendations for the Sudan and South Sudan, and Mr. Jeremiah Mamabolo, the Joint Special Representative for Darfur, together with all the staff of UNAMID and Mr. Nicholas Haysom, the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan.

Secondly, we would like to underscore the improvements in the operating environment and the decrease in obstructions to the free movement of UNAMID and humanitarian personnel, as well as in crime. There have been no obstructions of aerial movements, humanitarian activities have not been significantly restricted, and in Jebel Marra progress has even been made in obtaining visas and authorizing the passage of cargoes from Port Sudan, as well as preparations for establishing an operations base in Golo. That is all significant progress. While some problems will still have to be addressed, there have been clear improvements. We encourage the Government to continue its cooperation with UNAMID in accordance with the status of forces agreement.

Thirdly, the relative stability in the humanitarian situation and the fact that no major displacements have been reported in Darfur is a good sign. However, the spread of disease and the effects of flooding are worrying. We support the efforts of the World Health Organization, UNICEF and humanitarian workers to contain the situation and urge them to cooperate and facilitate their work so as to help those affected as effectively as possible. We must also continue our efforts to improve the humanitarian situation for the internally displaced. Although the cases of abuse, human rights violations and other crimes have decreased compared with the previous period, we must redouble our efforts to put a stop to cases of illegal detention and violence against women and girls, particularly sexual and gender-based violence, and promote access to justice for women.

It is clear that one of the major current challenges ahead lies in reducing tensions surrounding the weapons collection, demobilization and reintegration promoted by the Government. We believe that the success of these processes is necessary to ensure lasting peace and that we must avoid any possible division while encouraging the engagement of the civilian population and militia with this process. This governmental campaign, which is in line with the peacebuilding process led by the United Nations, needs the support of the international community.

Today, the Sudan requires the joint work of the African Union, the United Nations and the international community in general in order to pursue its development and peacebuilding efforts in Darfur. It is critical to ensure State authority over its entire territory; that the rule of law is established; that institutions, the police and justice are strengthened; and that processes of reconciliation and development projects are promoted. Regarding the latter, we welcome the measures being taken to address the difficult economic situation in Darfur, such as the lifting of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on the Sudan. We also believe that the time has come for the sanctions imposed by the Security Council to be lifted.

In closing, we commend the progress made in reconfiguring UNAMID. We must strengthen the capacities of the United Nations country team so as to ensure the successful withdrawal of the hybrid operation. This must be a joint effort of the Government and interested parties, together with the United Nations. We thank UNAMID for its dedication and efforts in seeking to restore peace in Darfur.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report submitted on his behalf to the Council (S/2017/907). I would also like to thank the Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations for his report. I further thank the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ms. Bintou Keita, and express our great appreciation for the briefing she has just delivered. We welcome her as a messenger for peace to New York, as she was a messenger for peace in Darfur before assuming her new position here.

It is probably appropriate to mention the fact that the 2011 Doha agreement is an international agreement concluded under the auspices of the United Nations, the African Union and the League of Arab States. However, up until June, the agreement — in our view and in general — has been partially flouted by the Council. Nevertheless, through our rather limited national resources, we have continued to implement the agreement with the support of a few countries, particularly the State of Qatar. Today, and as in all similar instances when a peace agreement is achieved — for

example, as was the case in Colombia recently — we believe that the United Nations should take a collective stand for peace and leverage all of its weight to advance the peacebuilding stage in Darfur, specifically in terms of the need for humanitarian assistance.

In that regard, we believe that resolution 2363 (2017) is appropriate. It calls for the onset of the gradual drawdown and reconfiguration of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), paving the way for the situation in Darfur to advance to a new stage of peacebuilding and the consolidation of stability, security and peace in all states of Darfur, except for a pocket of land that is rather limited in terms of surface area, located in Jebel Marra. Jebel Marra, as the Council is aware, is a region of Central Darfur state, which is one of the five states that constitute greater Darfur. The resolution further echoes the ongoing calls of the Sudanese Government since 2015 with respect to the need to take into account and adapt to the major changes that Darfur has experienced and that have transformed the dynamics of the conflict.

Today the fighting has stopped between the Government and armed groups, which have become active outside the country. Furthermore, the steady implementation of the provisions of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and of significant measures adopted to resolve the conflict has enabled the Sudanese Government and its partners to pursue projects that address the root causes of the conflict and, at the same time, to tackle phenomena arising from this conflict, such as displacement and the circulation of weapons, through development projects and the delivery of services. We are fully aware of the challenges plaguing this phase, and we urge the Council to continue its collaboration in order to enable us to tackle these challenges together. We would also point to the important measures adopted by the Sudanese Government, including the arms collection campaign.

If I may, I should like to clarify a few points.

First, the Government of the Sudan, in dealing with the phenomena arising from the conflict, has announced a campaign to collect arms voluntarily from the hands of citizens, under the supervision of the First Vice-President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, who have conducted the campaign with the relevant parties at the state and federal levels. The campaign is beginning to bear fruit. The first stage has been concluded to the letter of the announced plan. All reports point to the fact that it has enjoyed deal success. The second stage will be launched shortly to implement the law on weapons and munitions so as to limit their possession to the regular armed forces and those with permits from the competent authorities. All those who breach this law will be stripped of their arms and brought to justice.

Before the Council, we hereby announce that the Government of the Sudan is determined to continue implementing this plan and its provisions in order to ensure that the law prevails over those who violate it, regardless of any other consideration. UNAMID plays an important role in assisting the Government in the arms collection campaign and in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. This constitutes a fundamental priority in the current stage and an important aspect of the UNAMID mandate.

With regard to the unverified, albeit insignificant, information echoed in the report, we would like to draw the Council's attention to a point raised in the past by the former Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, to the effect that it is high time for the United Nations to rely on its own information rather than on information from other sources. The same remarks were echoed by the former Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, and are currently underscored by Secretary-General Guterres.

We commend the measures adopted by UNAMID to date within the framework of the implementation of the recommendations of resolution 2363 (2017). Pursuant to that resolution, UNAMID has closed 11 sites as a first step, and we trust that this action will continue in order to implement the second stage of its drawdown and reconfiguration plan, which was adopted by the Council in June in order to pave the way for the further drawdown of UNAMID forces and their ultimate withdrawal from the Sudan as soon as possible.

I would like to reaffirm the Government's long-standing position in favour of enabling UNAMID to fully implement its mandate. Previous reports and the current report have attested to this cooperation in all areas, particularly with regard to the customs clearance of containers and the issuance of visas and access and movement permits for the Mission and the humanitarian partners, as well the response to UNAMID's request to open a temporary operational base in the Golo region, for which the procedures are being conducted in a proper manner.

Fifteen years have passed since some outlaws from the remnants of armed groups took up arms and persistently refused throughout all these years to take part in any national, regional or United Nations initiatives for peace. Today, as we approach 2018, the only thing left for them to do is spread false and misleading information. We are confident that the Secretariat will not attribute much importance to such allegations and that it will fully verify any information prior to endorsing it, as required by the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Council members may rest assured that the Government of the Sudan is doing everything it can to achieve lasting peace and stability in Darfur. In several areas, the Government is striving to deal with the phenomena that have arisen from the conflict. For example, the Sudanese Government has set up development plans and programmes that would lift Darfur from the cycle of poverty into productivity and self-sufficiency.

The nature of the conflict in Darfur has shifted and there have been no clashes with armed groups for almost two years. We are entering a new phase in which the State will be able to enjoy absolute sovereignty through its different manifestations. Therefore, logically and politically, it is necessary to revisit the sanctions that were imposed 12 years ago when resolution 1591 (2005) was adopted in 2005. There is no doubt that this step would constitute a recognition of the reality of the current situation, as we have previously stated. We are awaiting a positive response and are certainly open to ideas and proposals from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

The humanitarian situation remains a key priority for the Government of the Sudan. In spite of an increase in the number of displaced persons voluntarily returning to their villages, the continuing presence of refugee camps in Darfur is no longer justified following the restoration of peace, stability and security, especially given that the peace partners in Darfur have made considerable efforts to prepare and equip villages, thereby ensuring better conditions for people to voluntarily return by providing basic services. Local and international efforts must continue in order to encourage displaced persons to return voluntarily, and we have developed a plan to address the situation based on three options that could produce effective solutions to this phenomenon.

In conclusion, we commend the tireless efforts being made to conclude the peace process. We once again welcome this step towards peace, which is synonymous with development and will certainly help us to end the conflict. My country's delegation would like to thank UNAMID for its efforts in all areas, as well as the peacekeepers for their sacrifices over the years. We also thank the troop- and police-contributing countries and stand ready to cooperate with all regional and international partners until all UNAMID personnel are withdrawn from the Sudan, following the full and successful completion of their mandate.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8104

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8104th meeting

Thursday, 16 November 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Alfano	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Siala, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings from Mr. Salamé and Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

I give the floor to Mr. Salamé.

Mr. Salamé: I would like to congratulate Italy on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. I am privileged to see Minister Alfano presiding over this meeting, which is a reflection of Italy's strong commitment to supporting the United Nations effort to end the crisis in Libya.

It has been two months since the launch of the action plan for Libya. The action plan is made up of a number of ingredients which the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has simultaneously started working on, including amending the Libyan Political Agreement, organizing a national conference, preparing for elections and providing humanitarian assistance.

The Libyan case may appear simple. As a nation without stark ethnic or sectarian divides, but with a good educational system and a wealth of natural resources, many challenges faced elsewhere are not found there. But what might be mistaken for a homogenous nation is actually a country divided at the atomic level. Sparked by the 2011 conflict and fueled over the subsequent years, the national polity has imploded. In its place, there has been an explosion of competing individual agendas, often masquerading as representing regions, cities or tribes. Reconstituting the Libyan national polity is a must, for without it effective institutions cannot form, and rebuilding a State can only be a Sisyphean endeavour.

I am pleased to report that over the past two months, the action plan has made significant headway. The United Nations convened two sessions of the joint drafting committee, composed of members from both the House of Representatives and the High State Council, to agree on a set of amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement in UNSMIL's offices in Tunis. For the first time, with these meetings article 12 of the Libyan Political Agreement has been implemented. I welcome the mutual recognition of the two assemblies and their acknowledgment of the Libyan Political Agreement as the sole available framework for ending the crisis in Libya.

Since the meetings, the two bodies have been in constant contact. Though much progress has been made, a few remaining points are still to be agreed. I am quite confident that we are close to a consensus. We will not tailor a process to pick particular candidates, and any mechanism to select a new Presidency Council and Government must be transparent and fair. I am pleased to report that the Libyan public has overwhelmingly welcomed this principled approach. It is expected that politicians are overexcited by the question of "who", but for us, what is important is the question of "how" — by which we mean, there must be a fair, open and competitive process.

Work is also ongoing on other aspects of the action plan. UNSMIL is well into preparations for the national conference — al-Multaqa al-Watani — which is to take place in February 2018. We are currently exploring the possibility of hosting it inside Libya, and I welcome the many Libyan offers of assistance that we have received. The national conference will give Libyans from all across the country the opportunity to come together in one place for the first time, to renew their common national narrative, and to agree on the tangible steps required to end the transition. I insist that the conference be inclusive in order to allow the adoption of a true national charter and provide guidelines for the legislation needed to end the transition. Such a conference is needed now more than ever in the light

of renewed threats to national unity issued recently by parallel authorities.

As for elections, we are intensively trying to establish the proper political and technical conditions for their occurrence. Elections should not take place until we are certain that they will not add a third Parliament or a fourth Government. Libyans deserve uncontested national institutions.

To ensure preparedness, the High National Electoral Commission is working to initiate a voter registration update before the end of the year, which will be the first such exercise since 2014. The international community stands fully ready to support the process. On its part, the House of Representatives must assume its duty to pass the requisite electoral legislation. There must also be a clear constitutional framework. The Constitutional Drafting Assembly was elected and mandated to produce a new constitution, and it has completed its draft. I salute its fortitude for the pressure it has faced and condemn the threats made against Assembly members.

The constitutional process must now move forward. While we work together to implement the various parts of the action plan, no vacuum is acceptable. The Libyan Political Agreement of 2015 must therefore stand, amended or not, as the framework for the conclusion of the transition.

As part of the action plan, the United Nations is also working to create a more secure and normal life for all citizens so that Libyans can go about their daily lives free from fear and want. We are intensifying our engagement with armed groups and developing our strategy for their gradual reintegration into civilian life. In Tripoli, our experts are working closely with State security forces to empower them to secure the capital more effectively. Moreover, we continue our engagement with military leaders across the country on the future shape of Libya's defence institutions. The sustainable delivery of human security in Libya also needs an empowered judiciary and professional law enforcement and security agencies. The United Nations is working with the Ministry of Justice and other Libyan actors on initiatives, in particular reforming the appalling detention system.

The Mission continues to work to facilitate dialogue between local communities and institutions, such as the preliminary agreement recently reached between Tripoli and Zintan. In this context, I commend the decision of the Presidency Council to create a national reparations fund for all victims of the conflict.

We cannot ignore the dire humanitarian situation in Libya. In the past, the country has been a donor to much of Africa; now, 25 per cent of the population has humanitarian needs. In particular, Libya's health sector is in crisis. Only a fraction of the country's public hospitals is functioning. Medicines are in short supply and modern equipment is often left in disrepair. Foreign staff, the traditional backbone of Libya's health-care system, have fled. Some Libyan practitioners warn that the country is vulnerable to a potential epidemic outbreak. We plan to call a high-level coordination meeting among local and international stakeholders early in 2018.

It is outrageous that a country that stands upon such vast wealth has so much suffering. However, it does, and so we must help it to tackle the most urgentconcerns.

Our humanitarian strategy seeks to help to address the acute needs of the most vulnerable groups. I hope the the Council can consider supporting our programme for 2018, not to mention the now critical two-year-old Stabilization Facility for Libya, which has brought tangible benefits to communities in Ubari, Benghazi, Sabha, Sirte and Kikla. Encouraged by the success, the Facility is expanding to Bani Walid and the greater Tripoli area. Owing to the Stabilization Facility, hospitals have been reopened and children have classrooms.

Yet that is not enough. Much more remains to be done. On migrants and refugees, despite emergency assistance, we have seen an increase in the number of people arbitrarily detained in a system with no accountability or due process. Migrants continue to be subjected to extreme violence, forced labour, extortion, killings and other grave abuses inside and outside official places of detention. We urge the Libyan Government to address that challenge directly and comprehensively in order to find a solution that respects the rights of migrants and host communities across the country. The United Nations stands ready to work with the Libyan authorities and their northern and southern neighbours to develop innovative and sustainable solutions.

Beyond the action plan, three very serious challenges have appeared on our agenda: impunity for grave crimes, the economy of predation and the erosion of frozen assets.

First, impunity and lawlessness continue to prevail across the country in the face of increasingly heinous crimes committed every day. A few recent examples include the fact that, on 26 October, 36 corpses were found in Al-Abyar, near Benghazi. The corpses showed signs of having been tortured before they were executed. That example is one in a long series of discoveries of corpses being dumped in and around Benghazi over the past months. Days later, a fighter jet bombed a family in the outskirts of the city of Derna. Fourteen civilians, most of whom were children, and including some women, were killed in an appalling incident tantamount to a war crime. On 20 October, in Tripoli, the bodies of three men were handed over to families hours after having been taken alive during clashes in the Al-Ghrarat area, raising concerns of extrajudicial killings. We are still investigating the recent events that led to the death of numerous fighters in the Warshafanah area, in western Libya. There are suspicions that a number of those fighters may have been killed in a manner that violates international law.

Events such as these shake popular faith in the political process. I once again call on the Libyan authorities to investigate those incidents and to hold the perpetrators to account. However, I cannot ignore that such events take place across the country with alarming regularity and I cannot accept that repeated calls for justice go unheeded. If Libyans alone cannot combat impunity for war crimes, it is time for the international community to consider mechanisms, including possibly joint tribunals, that can help them to do so.

The second challenge is that politics in Libya are strongly shaped by economic predation. In an environment of protracted insecurity and a lack of accountability, the shadow economy has been flourishing. Billions of dollars are lost every year in illicit money transfers. The gap between the official exchange rate, set at 1.4 Libyan dinars to the dollar, and the black-market exchange rate, at 9 dinars to the dollar, provides ample opportunities to earn huge profit margins. Brokers benefit from the selling of letters of credits and cheques. The traffic of subsidized fuel to foreign countries robs the country of hundreds of millions of dollars every month. Other measures include the issuing of overvalued government contracts. The result is that Libya's financial reserves are depleting rapidly. Libya is a textbook example of the appearance of instant millionaires and of the extremely rapid pace of middle-class impoverishment. It is the Libyan people who pay the highest price for that. Two of every five Libyan youths are now unemployed.

The third challenge, beyond predation, which robs the country of many dollars, is that hundreds of millions more dollars are being silently lost due to the poor management of Libya's frozen assets. Freezing the assets is one thing. However, their mismanagement is another. We should revisit how Libya's external wealth and investments are managed so that they are not silently and gradually lost for future generations.

The relaunch of the political process has created a new momentum. I am pleased to see many constructive and peaceful debates on the future of the country. It is testimony to the commitment of the Libyan people that, on a daily basis, I receive new ideas and suggestions about the political process from ordinary citizens who are keen and free to participate in shaping their country's future. Those citizens are not prepared to sacrifice their rights for security — and they do not need to do so. In a society based on institutions, neither rights nor security must be compromised.

I am committed to doing my utmost to assist the Libyans to resolve their political crisis. The United Nations is ramping up its presence in Libya and has already significantly increased its footprint in the country.

Allow me to end by thanking Council members for their commitment and support to our efforts to resolve the crisis in Libya. I would also like to thank our Quartet partners: the African Union, the League of Arab States and the European Union. Their unified efforts are key to the success of the action plan and the better future that it promises for the people of Libya.

The President: I thank Mr. Salamé for his excellent and comprehensive briefing and for his work.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Skoog.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): In accordance with paragraph 24 (e) of resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February 2011, I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established by the same resolution. The report covers the period from 29 August to 16 November 2017, during which time the Committee met once in informal consultations and conducted additional work via the silence procedure.

At the outset, I would like to note that, based on the requests of the Libyan Government, on 20 and 31 October, respectively, the Committee renewed the listings of the *Capricorn* and the *Lynn S* vessels for a further period of 90 days each. Pursuant to information received from the Panel of Experts on Libya, the Committee also updated the most recently known locations of those vessels on its sanctions list. As the Council will recall, the vessels were included on the sanctions list for attempting to illicitly export gasoil from Libya. During the reporting period, the Committee also responded to a request for guidance from Egypt on the scope of the measures contained in paragraphs 10 (a) and 10 (b) of resolution 2146 (2014), as they relate to vessels transiting the Suez Canal.

With respect to the arms embargo, the Committee approved two requests for exemption, submitted under paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011). Those requests came from the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the Netherlands, respectively. The Committee also received, and did not object to, a notification submitted under paragraph 13 (b) of resolution 1970 (2011) from UNSMIL, and received two post-delivery notifications from the Mission. There was no agreement on the Committee on follow-up action with regard to recommendation 5 contained in the final report of the Panel of Experts (S/2017/466), which relates to the arms embargo.

With regard to the assets freeze, the Committee sought further clarification on an exemption request, submitted by Switzerland pursuant to paragraph 19 (b) of resolution 1970 (2011). The Committee also continued its consideration of an exemption request submitted by Canada, without reference to any specific exemption provision.

The Committee is also considering technical updates to its guidelines for the conduct of its work. The previous time such an exercise was undertaken was in October 2011.

Finally, on 10 November, the Committee convened informal consultations jointly with the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan on the subject of the presence and activities of Darfuri armed groups in Libya and South Sudan. That was an initiative of the Chair of the 1591 Committee following his visit to the Sudan in May 2017. During the discussion, the Panels of Experts assisting the three Committees shared their findings on the illicit cross-border activities of the Darfuri armed groups, including fighting as mercenaries for different sides in Libya, engaging in actions that violated the arms embargo in relation to Libya, and participating in or facilitating fuel smuggling and migrant trafficking in Libya. Committee members exchanged views on the matter.

The President: I thank Ambassador Skoog for his briefing and for his effective work as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

It is now my pleasure to switch hats and deliver a statement on behalf of Italy. Again, I wish to thank Special Representative Salamé for his briefing, Ambassador Skoog for the update on the sanctions committee and Minister Siala for being at our meeting today.

In Libya, stability and security across the Mediterranean are at stake. A political solution is indispensable. There are no military shortcuts, because if a party goes for the military option, the crisis could continue for a long time and Da'esh could re-emerge. The fight against terrorism must remain a strategic priority and the control of the Libyan borders is also very critical. Today, for instance, after the defeat of Da'esh in Iraq and in Syria, foreign fighters may return to Libya and, from there, to Europe.

Italy has saved and welcomed thousands of refugees and migrants by combining solidarity and security, but, especially at this moment, the focus on the Libyan borders has become a security imperative. It is a task that must be shared by the main actors of the international community.

Only two months have passed since Ghassan Salamé laid out his action plan. We appreciated the constructive approach of the discussions in Tunis. The image of the two delegations sitting at the negotiating table was a very good signal. We do not underestimate the difficulties of a complex process. We are aware that critical issues remain unresolved. Obstacles and challenges are real. However, we stand firmly behind Mr. Salamé's efforts. Rushing to elections without progress on security and reconciliation may be counterproductive. Elections have to be kept on the political horizon, but voting without setting the rules could fuel tensions. For all these reasons, we call on

Libyans to support the political process and to seize the opportunity offered by Mr. Salamé's plan. The Libyans must build upon it with a spirit of openness and compromise.

Next month is the second anniversary of the Skhirat Political Agreement. This anniversary is not a deadline. Instead, it should be used to redouble efforts for political compromise and to promote reconciliation. The parties and the international community cannot allow a dangerous vacuum in the Libyan institutions. The Libyan Political Agreement remains the only framework for the transition. While the Libyans are negotiating, we need institutional interlocutors to define and implement programmes for the sake of the Libyan people. In order to improve security, Libya needs unified security forces under the control of the Presidency Council.

Libya cannot afford to fall victim to new armed conflicts. Italy has condemned the brutal bombings near Derna and the horrific killings discovered near Benghazi. We join the Libyan people, the Libyan institutions and the United Nations in calling for an impartial investigation on the latest tragic episodes. At the same time, full humanitarian access must be granted where basic needs and human rights are at risk. For example, we welcome the news that the World Health Organization managed to enter Derna to deliver medical aid.

Italy is very close to the civilian population. We have provided humanitarian and development assistance to fragile sectors of society, including women, children, refugees and migrants. The decline of migration flows is encouraging, but it cannot be at the expense of human rights. Italy has devoted many resources to the Libyan Coast Guard and local municipalities. We want to improve the appalling conditions of refugee and migrant centres. We are now launching new calls for projects of non-governmental organizations. Already, we are working together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

A crucial component of Libya's stabilization is the relaunch of its economy. Libya would also benefit from a long-term vision — a kind of Libya 2030 Agenda — as a framework for action.

Allow me a final word on the international community's presence in Libya. Italy was the first western country to reopen its embassy in Tripoli. We welcome the gradual increase of the United Nations presence and we encourage other countries to consider their return. Together, we shall rebuild those political, economic and cultural ties that can help our Libyan friends on the path to peace, security and stability.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I welcome you, Mr. President, back to New York. It is a pleasure to see you at this meeting. I think your presence is a sign of your country's commitment to the people of Libya at this difficult time for them.

I also thank Ambassador Skoog for all his hard work on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, and Special Representative Salamé for his thorough and fascinating briefing. It has certainly been an eventful two months sent he set out his action plan for Libya to the General Assembly. Under his guidance there have been important steps forward to revitalize the Libyan political process. Yet, in recent weeks, violence has escalated again. It is clear that Libya now faces a simple choice — a future of stability and security or a return to a past of violence and uncertainty.

Let me start with the positives, and there have been positive developments on the political process. The dialogue committees from both the House of Representatives and the High State Council worked hard to secure agreements on amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement. This has taken courage and compromise, but of course it is only a start. Further commitment from all parties is now needed to sustain the momentum and move Libya forward. In doing so, we should not lose sight of what is at stake. It is a real chance now for Libya to establish a truly national Government — one that will enjoy the support of both the House of Representatives and the High State Council and that will be able to deliver for all its citizens. Further delay, however, will only prolong the suffering of ordinary Libyans who I think we can all agree have suffered for far too long.

We need only look at the recent escalation in violence to see the consequences of delay. The strikes on Derna, which killed 16 civilians and the recent apparent summary executions in Al-Abyar and Warshafanah are examples. There are many others. These escalating acts

of violence make it unambiguously clear that a political solution is no longer a choice, but a critical necessity for the Libyan people. We should all be concerned by these continuing human rights violations and abuses across the country, so many of them at the expense of civilians, including migrants. Let us all condemn extrajudicial killings by all parties from all sides of the conflict. The climate of impunity must stop. I reiterate our support for Libyan and international efforts to bring to account those responsible for such crimes.

It is clear from the recent escalation in violence that the existing arms embargo has not cut off the flow of illicit weapons in and out of Libya. This is not only undermining the peace and security of Libya and the region, but it is also playing into the hands of terrorist groups who continue to threaten global security. I urge all Member States to make every effort to ensure that the arms embargo is strictly observed.

Engagement between both sides is needed not only for the political process, but also for the economy. A prosperous economy will be realized only if key economic institutions take the steps necessary to introduce important reforms. It is also vital that Libya's oil resources be used to benefit the country as a whole. I call on all Member States to make sure that they continue to do all they can to prevent illegal oil smuggling and enforce the sanctions regime, which was designed to protect Libya's oil wealth for the benefit of the Libyan people.

Let me conclude by reiterating that the Libyan Political Agreement remains the only valid framework for Libya's transitional period into 2018. The United Kingdom will continue to support the immediate next steps to amend the Agreement and agree on a reformed Presidency Council. We will also support subsequent efforts to promote national reconciliation, agree on a longer-term Constitution and prepare for elections. We believe that the United Nations must remain firmly at the helm and that the international community must be united and steadfast in its support because, simply put, conflict and instability in Libya are hurting the region and the world, but most of all, they are hurting Libya's citizens. I therefore call on Libya's leaders from all sides to show that they are committed to delivering peace and security for all Libyan people. They must look beyond immediate personal considerations and towards the long-term future of their country. They have a responsibility to make progress and I urge them to continue to work with Special Representative Salamé and take the bold steps required to move Libya forward.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank you, Mr. President, and we are pleased to have you in the Chamber today. We are grateful to Mr. Ghassan Salamé for his briefing. We very much hope that he can execute his difficult task of helping to unify Libya and we sincerely wish him every success. There is no alternative to that path if the aim is to end the crisis as soon as possible and put a stop the threats emanating from Libya, including terrorism.

The country's complicated situation is still extremely worrying. The political fragmentation continues, the authorities disagree with one another and armed groups, some of them radicalized, control large areas. Terrorists are hiding out in remote corners and remain dangerous despite having suffered losses. Various forms of criminal activity are flourishing, set up by the criminal networks that have enmeshed the entire Mediterranean region, and there is evidence that the contraband activity may be reaching Europe. The Libyan economy is clearly in dire straits and the social sector is in bad shape. The situation of permanent chaos is having a detrimental effect on the Libyan people, who are sick of living with the protracted consequences of the adventurist military undertaking of 2011.

However, there have been some encouraging moments suggesting there may be hope for a certain amount of progress in the political process. It appears that those Libyan leaders with common sense realize that the crisis can be resolved only by political means. The obligation to refrain from the use of force is crucial, as is their demonstrated willingness to act based on the Libyan Political Agreement in order to implement the arrangements previously agreed to on establishing national institutions and law enforcement bodies. We should not omit to note the Libyans' intention to hold elections under United Nations supervision in accordance with Mr. Salamé's action plan. We would like to be sure that in both Tripoli and Tobruk they have understood that the only way to deal with this crisis is through joint efforts at the negotiating table. If not, the country will be plunged into even greater chaos, fraught with irreversible consequences for the Libyan regime.

We support the efforts that have been undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations and welcome the signs we are seeing of momentum in finding

solutions. As a long-time friend of Libya, Russia will continue to assist it in that regard. We have been working systematically with the Libyan parties since the signing of the Agreement in Skhirat, guided by the imperative of preserving Libya's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We encourage the Libyans to overcome their internal differences and seek mutually acceptable solutions on all disputed issues. We stress the importance of promoting a constructive dialogue and ensuring that it is broadly representative. Much remains to be done on that front, since various political forces in Libya are still sitting on the sidelines of the political process. However, our principled position is that the Libyan people themselves must decide their country's fate and that attempts to impose ready-made schemes on them would be counterproductive.

There is still significant work to be done in order to arrive at lasting agreements on the parameters for national reconciliation, and in that connection it will still be vital to ensure dynamic international support to the political process in Libya so as to promote stability during its transitional period. We should consolidate that support and ensure that no needless competition is involved, thereby avoiding the creation of any new dividing lines. That also applies to the various forms of practical assistance provided by Libya's foreign partners, including the various so-called training programmes. The efforts of the United Nations will be successful only if we all play by the same rules. We appreciate the importance of the steps taken by international and regional sponsors of the political process in Libya, including its neighbours, but the United Nations should continue to take the main coordinating role.

Our colleague Mr. Olof Skoog, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, has briefed us on the subsidiary body's recent activities. For our part, we note that the problem of the uncontrolled circulation of weapons in Libya is still acute, especially in the absence of a unified army and other law-enforcement bodies. It affects security both in the country and the Sahel-Saharan region, which is why it is crucial to ensure that the arms embargo is strictly observed. In the circumstances, it would be premature to start talking about relaxing the current sanctions regime. As far as illicit exports from Libya of oil and oil derivatives are concerned, that represents a serious problem for the national economy. However, Sanctions Committee measures should be strictly applied based on real, verified data and in line with the parameters established in the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, with no free interpretations of the rules.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Special Representative Ghassan Salamé for his very enlightening briefing and welcome his continued efforts in the quest for a political solution, which, needless to say, is the only way forward in Libya. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Sweden for his helpful briefing on the ongoing work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

For France, success in Libya depends on two complementary requirements. We must maintain unity within the Security Council in support of Mr. Salamé's efforts in order to strengthen the current political momentum, while affirming that it is the joint responsibility of all the Libyan stakeholders to assume ownership of the political process and take their destiny into their own hands.

On the political front, we will continue giving our full support to the Special Representative in his difficult task. I would like to commend his exemplary commitment. The consultations between the two chambers begun in Tunis in September enabled a consensus to be reached on key points, including reform of the Presidency Council. The progress made in Tunis still has to be finalized in the next stages of the action plan, and our joint support to Mr. Salamé will be crucial for that. As I have said, for the action plan to succeed, every Libyan stakeholder has to take on more responsibility. We encourage dialogue among all stakeholders within the Mr. Salamé's framework, which represents the only valid mediation effort. We hope that everyone in Libya who has clout in the national reconciliation process will engage sincerely and resolutely with the Special Representative in order to implement the various stages of his action plan — the review by the High Statae Council and the House of Representatives of the Skhirat Political Agreement, the holding of an inclusive national conference, the preparations for elections and the adoption of the Constitution.

In that connection, France condemns the individual strategies that have led some key players to hold the Libyan Political Agreement review process

hostage, as France's Foreign Minister Le Drian had the opportunity to remind stakeholders. The international community must exert all its influence on Libyan officials to engage responsibly and unambiguously in the political process. In that regard, we reiterate that the Skhirat Agreement remains the only valid and legitimate framework for any negotiations aimed at completing the transition and eventually establishing a constitutional framework and holding elections. We must continue to hammer home the fact that there can be no military solution in Libya. Defeating terrorism in the country in the long term and responding to the challenges presented by migration demands a political solution that allows for national reconciliation and the restoration of a State in full control of its territory.

We are very concerned about the increasing number of violent acts and the deteriorating security situation across Libya, from the recent strikes on Derna to the discovery of a mass grave in Al-Abyar in the Benghazi region. Fighting groups identified by the United Nations as terrorists is a priority, but so is ensuring the protection of civilians. Only the unification of all Libyan forces will effectively combat terrorism, secure borders and dismantle migrant trafficking networks. That is why building a unified national security architecture under the civilian authorities is a top priority.

It will also be essential to address economic and humanitarian issues as well as those on the security front, as Mr. Salamé emphasized so eloquently in his briefing. The situation for Libyans, particularly the middle class, is deteriorating rapidly and is not sustainable. Libya's oil resources must remain under the exclusive control of the Government of National Accord and the National Oil Corporation of Tripoli, the only legitimate authorities, in order to benefit all Libyans in accordance with Council resolutions. We must preserve and strengthen the sanctions regimes within the framework of the arms embargo and the fight against illicit oil flows in order to support the political process. We must also put an end to the parallel economy that Mr. Salamé called "the economy of predation", which is fuelled by political divisions and conflict. We reiterate that the Council must be able to take all necessary measures against any individuals or entities threatening Libya's stability. We must also continue to encourage dialogue between the Presidency Council and economic and financial institutions.

We are appalled by the deplorable treatment of migrants travelling through Libya. While the issue is yet another challenge for the Libyan authorities, it is also one for the international community. France therefore calls on the Libyan authorities to make every effort to ensure that migrants are treated with dignity and to strengthen officials' cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. The violence and abuse that has been inflicted on migrants in Libya is intolerable. Our top priority must be to protect human rights and combat organized crime. Strengthening national institutions and developing economic alternatives to trafficking are essential to that.

Lastly, we want to stress that it is important for Libya to fulfil its obligation to cooperate with the International Criminal Court in handing over persons for whom arrest warrants have been issued. That would represent an important sign of the Libyan parties' commitment to the fight against impunity, which is vital if they are to preserve the confidence of the Libyan people in their own State. The crimes that persist in Libya must not go unpunished. That is one of the necessary conditions not only for justice but also for reconciliation and peace.

In conclusion, on behalf of France, I would like to stress how urgent it is to continue implementing Mr. Salamé's action plan, and all our joint efforts should be geared to that. It is in the best interests of Libyans, as well as the international community, to work for national reconciliation and a political consensus. Our unity and common commitment are more necessary than ever for achieving that and completing the various stages of the action plan. In that context, it will be important to maintain the resources of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya so that it can effectively discharge its mandate.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank you, Mr. President, for your presence here this morning and for presiding over this important meeting, which is very much appreciated. I also thank Special Representative Salamé for his valuable and informative briefing and, even more importantly, for his commitment and that of the Secretary-General to actively leading as well as coordinating the international community's efforts in support of peace and security in Libya. I also want to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Mohamed Siala, Libya's Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to thank him

for being here today. I look forward to hearing his statement later on.

We have consistently advocated for the United Nations to play the leading role in the mediation and support efforts in Libya. The Secretary-General's vision for a reinvigorated and long-term United Nations approach has provided a blueprint for our concerted action. Mr. Salamé can count on our continued and full support for his efforts to implement the action plan for Libya. We will continue to support efforts to amend the Libyan Political Agreement, which is the only viable framework for the transitional period into 2018, and to agree on a reformed Presidency Council, with a view to preparing for elections and promoting national reconciliation. To that end, we welcome the proposed next steps that Mr. Salamé outlined for us today and, as others have, we call on all the parties to engage constructively with him in that process.

We welcome the participation of women in the drafting committee sessions in Tunis. Going forward, we emphasize the critical importance of women's representation and full and equal participation in each step of the process, and of ensuring that upcoming committee gatherings, as well as the national conference, will provide opportunities for their concerns to be addressed, including with regard to security and mobility.

We took careful note of Mr. Salamé's pertinent observations on the depletion of funds and the management, or perhaps mismanagement, of Libyan assets. Like him, we are deeply concerned about the widespread abuses and violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law being perpetrated by all sides, from Derna and Al-Abyar in the East to Aarsbefana in the West, almost always with complete impunity. Summary executions, kidnappings, torture, rape and other forms of sexual abuse must stop and be investigated, and those responsible must be brought to justice. In the absence of accountability, those crimes also contribute to a dangerous spiral of revenge and retaliation that threatens the promise of peace in Libya. I thank Mr. Salamé for stressing those issues today, and we encourage the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to step up its human rights monitoring. Italy took careful note of his thoughts on how justice can be improved, including through international expert mechanisms.

We welcomed the first visit to Libya by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in October. That was significant, and we share his grave concerns, which others here today have echoed, about the suffering of migrants and refugees and about the conditions in detention facilities. Clearly, further efforts are needed to turn them into open-transit centres that meet international standards. Support is also needed for the important work being carried out in Libya by the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to find sustainable alternatives to detention, especially for vulnerable groups.

In conclusion, as all the speakers before me have stressed, we must now seize the window of opportunity that exists to advance the political process in Libya and lay the foundations for long-term peace and stability. It is essential that all Libyan stakeholders engage constructively and for the good of the Libyan people and that the Council and the wider international community come together in support of those efforts.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, we commend you, Sir, as Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, for presiding over this important Security Council meeting at an important historical juncture for our brother country of Libya. I would like to thank Mr. Skoog for his statement in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. I would also like to thank Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, for his briefing, and to take this opportunity to express to him Egypt's continued support for his intensive work aimed at achieving a political solution to the Libyan crisis.

I would like to outline some of Egypt's efforts to help to unify and strengthen the Libyan National Army forces and support the work of Mr. Salamé and the United Nations in general. The Egyptian committee tasked with the Libyan issue hosted a delegation of Libyan military personnel in Cairo from 29 October to 2 November, where they conducted detailed discussions on various ideas and solutions aimed at launching a new era with a view to unifying the Libyan military establishment. A group of specialized technical committees has been formed to discuss unifying the military establishment and to explore various concerns related to achieving that goal. The discussions focused on issues pertaining to the nature of the relationship

between the civilian authorities and the military, as well as how to restructure and reorganize the latter. The delegation agreed to meet again in Cairo, following a presentation of the discussions back home in Libya, so as to continue consultations on the necessary procedures and to acknowledge the recommendations that the committees have endorsed for reunifying the military establishment.

On the political front, Egypt continues to follow closely the meetings of the High State Council on amending the Libyan Political Agreement. In that regard, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for Mr. Salamé's exhaustive efforts and the importance of continuing to expand the range of consultations on the amendments. We also consider it important to ensure that the participants display the flexibility needed to enable the implementation of the Agreement, which we all desire. It will be crucial to avoid confrontation and embrace harmony and agreement. We should also note that time is not on our side, because any delay in arriving at a consensus on the amendments to the Agreement would expose the crisis in Libya to further complications. We must therefore work quickly to finalize those amendments by the end of the year.

With regard to developments on the ground, we express our deep concern about the military manoeuvres and recent clashes in Warshefana, in western Libya. Egypt urges all parties to exercise self-control and avoid escalation.

In conclusion, we reiterate our full support for the work of the United Nations and Mr. Salamé, and we wish the brotherly people of Libya peace, prosperity and well-being.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a privilege to welcome you to today's Council meeting, Mr. President. Bolivia commends the presence and the work of Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). We want to express our support and gratitude to him for his major efforts in achieving the progress that has been made since his appointment. We also express our appreciation for the work and briefing of Ambassador Olof Skoog in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. Bolivia also commends His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Siala, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya, for his presence here today.

We would like to begin by calling on parties to implement the Libyan Political Agreement and to maintain a sustained dialogue aimed at accomplishing a peaceful, orderly and inclusive political transition, led by and for the Libyan people, that addresses their interests and will enable them to define their own future within the framework of Libya's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We believe that Mr. Salamé's proposals — which include establishing a national conference to bring together all political stakeholders to work together on constitutional, legislative and institutional reforms, as well as organizing an electoral process that will enable the adoption of a Constitution and promote progress towards presidential and parliamentary elections — will pave the way to that goal. In that context, we emphasize and highlight the importance of the mediation efforts that the various regional and international stakeholders have been making to promote the Libyan political process and to strengthen the related cooperation mechanisms, and we acknowledge the initiatives undertaken by Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia to support and promote the process.

We are very concerned, however, about the continuing sporadic clashes between the parties and their high humanitarian cost. According to an UNSMIL report of 1 November, the casualties recorded in the month of October alone included 15 people injured and 23 killed by bombing, crossfire, or the presence of explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. Sadly, we must add those fatalities to the more than 30,000 victims of the conflict since 2011.

Moreover, the alarming number of migrants and refugees who have lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea — which in 2017 reportedly exceeded 3,000, according to a 13 November report from the International Organization for Migration — is only one aspect of the critical situation that these people are enduring on the Mediterranean coast. According to a report published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 13,000 migrants and refugees have been rescued in the Mediterranean Sea by the Libyan Coast Guard, an accomplishment that we appreciate and would like to highlight. We are nevertheless deeply troubled by the reports of the indefinite detention of migrants, reportedly amounting to more than 20,000 people in custody. The conditions to which they have been

subjected while in custody reportedly include torture, sexual violence and harassment, including the denial of medical help. In that regard, we call on all the parties to work to prevent and end human rights violations and abuse of migrants in centres under their control. We remind them that they must fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law and guarantee the rights of these individuals. In that regard, we call for the corresponding investigations to begin in order to identify those responsible for these violations and ensure that they are duly investigated and prosecuted.

We remind the actors and parties involved in the conflict that they are obligated to uphold and comply with their obligations in the framework of international humanitarian, avoid causing greater suffering to the civilian population and refrain from violating their fundamental rights.

Furthermore, we wish to express our support for the progress reported today by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya in accordance with its mandate and on follow-up tasks regarding the implementation of resolution 2362 (2017).

Finally, it is important to reiterate that the impact that the Libyan conflict has had on the security situation in the region is a direct consequence of the interventionist practices and regime change policies that have had an effect extending far beyond the Sahel region, with terrible consequences that we are still witnessing today.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): I would like to begin by welcoming the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, and to thank him and Ambassador Skoog for their informative briefings. I would also warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Siala to the Council.

Japan reiterates its support for the ongoing process among the Libyan people, in accordance with the action plan presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in September. We support the Special Representative's efforts to advance the process. The window of opportunity must be seized now. We are all aware that the negotiations will not be easy and that they will occasionally experience some bumps along the road. The important thing is to maintain the momentum of the dialogue in order to complete the transition, and that should be driven by the will of the Libyan people.

The Council should support the process by providing the necessary assistance. In particular, parties that have influence over relevant actors should contribute to containing any action that may negatively impact the process. Japan's Foreign Minister Kono directly conveyed Japan's readiness to support the Libyan-owned process to Foreign Minister Siala when they met in September.

Reflecting this commitment, we are now considering relocating our embassy to Tunis so that we can more closely follow the situation on the ground and strengthen cooperation with relevant countries and organizations. At the same time, in order for the year-long process to maintain its momentum and eventually bear fruit, the Council should not only be supporting dialogues among influential political figures, but must also consider how to strengthen the confidence and support of the Libyan people in the process. In order to build the confidence of the people in the ongoing political process, the provision of basic public services and enhancement of the capacity of the Government of National Accord and local Governments are essential. Assistance to internally displaced persons is also much needed.

We appreciate the action plan, as well as the presidential statement that followed (S/PRST/2017/19), recognizing the need to address these issues in parallel with the political process. Japan has been actively supporting local peacebuilding efforts in Libya, such as capacity- and institution-building, economic and social development and local reconciliation. These activities aim to help consolidate peace and stability from the local level. We have prioritized contributions to the Stabilization Facility for Libya, which is led by the Government of National Accord, and we are considering further peacebuilding assistance.

I would like to conclude by reiterating Japan's strong commitment to helping the Libyans overcome their challenges. The Libyan Political Agreement remains the only viable framework for Libya's transitional period, and we will continue to work in close coordination with the international community for its success.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Senegal is pleased to see you, Mr. President, presiding over this important briefing on the situation in Libya — a situation that your country is right to define as a top priority during its presidency

of the Council. I also welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Siala, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya, whose statement we look forward to hearing.

I should like to turn to my Ambassador Skoog, on my left, and congratulate him on the outstanding work that he and his country are doing at the helm of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

The current situation in Libya is of particular concern to us. The glimmer of hope kindled by the recent efforts of Mr. Salamé and countries such as France and Egypt has been threatened by the recent resurgence of violence. We are also concerned because its effects on the civilian population and throughout Africa have been catastrophic. For us Africans, the protraction and aggravation of the Libyan conflict continues to have an especially devastating effect on the entire continent, but especially the Sahelo-Saharan region. Weapons continue to circulate, terrorist groups are proliferating and human trafficking is flourishing, with its scourge of grave violations of international humanitarian law.

The evolution of the situation in Libya will depend partly on the successful implementation of several important initiatives under way, such as the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, the promising Group of Five for the Sahel process and the Alliance for the Sahel, promoted by France and Germany.

My delegation wishes to underscore that there are no military solutions to the Libyan crisis. We therefore encourage all Libyan parties to consider only the national interests of their country and to make every effort to overcome political differences and work together for the establishment of peace and security in order to preserve the national sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of their great African country.

Senegal also urges Libyans to exercise restraint, put an end to violence and confrontations, and work in a spirit of compromise on the basis of the Libyan Political Agreement. Although of course certain amendments need to be introduced — as Mr. Salamé mentioned earlier — the Agreement is the only viable framework accepted by the majority of Libyan actors in order to complete the political transition in the country through an inclusive process led by the Libyans themselves.

The challenges related to the current situation in Libya and its neighbouring countries remind us of the need to work towards the unification and reconstruction of the institutions in Libya, including the military and security forces, in accordance with the Libyan Political Agreement. Therefore, the implementation of the action plan proposed by Mr. Salamé deserves to be supported, while also taking advantage of the better coordination of numerous initiatives for the resumption of internal dialogue and Libya's geopolitical situation. That is why the work of UNSMIL, which has been led in an outstanding manner by Mr. Salamé on the ground, is essential and deserves our full support.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes to New York Mr. Angelino Alfano, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, to preside over this meeting. China also welcomes Foreign Minister Siala of Libya. China thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, and Ambassador Olof Skoog for their respective briefings.

The Libyan Political Agreement, concluded in December 2015, represents a major achievement of the Libyan people in their endeavour to restore peace and stability. Over the past two years, the people of Libya have made tireless efforts to implement the Libyan Political Agreement, and have achieved a certain degree of progress. In the meantime, Libya is facing multiple major challenges, ranging from significant political divergence, a fragile security situation, rampant terrorism and the problem of refugees and migrants.

China is following the situation and developments in Libya with close attention, and supports any and all attempts aimed at advancing the political process and promoting the united efforts of Libyan parties to fight terrorism. The Libyan parties should work together and adopt positive measures to advance the political process. The international community should reach a further common understanding on the matter and offer effective assistance to the Libyan peace process.

First, the search for a political solution must continue. The international community should respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Libya and continue to promote a political process that is led and owned by the Libyans themselves. The Libyan parties should demonstrate goodwill, settle their differences through inclusive political dialogue and, on the basis of the Libyan Political Agreement, find a solution that accommodates the concerns of

all parties in order to restore national authority and achieve national reconciliation, peace, stability and the development of the country.

Secondly, maximum efforts must be made to secure security in Libya and to create enabling conditions for an inclusive and sustainable political dialogue. China supports the efforts of Libya to safeguard its national security and stability, and hopes that the Libyan parties will strengthen their dialogue, set aside their differences, and continue to cooperate in areas of common interest to the Libyan people, such as fighting terrorism and accelerating economic development.

Thirdly, the United Nations should remain the main channel for mediation. Recently, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), under the leadership of Mr. Salamé, has been working on the United Nations action plan to promote the political process in Libya. UNSMIL has extensively engaged with Libyan parties, facilitated dialogue between the House of Representatives and the High State Council, and conducted the meaningful exploration of key issues, such as amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement.

China supports Mr. Salamé in steadily carrying out his work and appreciates the efforts of the neighbouring States, the League of Arab States and the African Union to facilitate dialogue among Libyans. We hope that the parties concerned will continue to advocate peace and promote dialogue and we urge all parties to demonstrate flexibility and actively participate in national reconciliation. China is ready to work consistently with the international community and make its own contribution to the early restoration of security, stability and prosperity in Libya.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, my delegation would like to welcome and acknowledge your presence, Sir, in presiding over today's meeting, as well as the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya, Mr. Mohamed Siala. We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, and Ambassador Olof Skoog for their committed work and comprehensive updates.

Kazakhstan welcomes the adoption of the new United Nations action plan aimed at resolving the protracted crisis in Libya, which was presented in September on the margins of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session. We fully support the mediation efforts of the international community, including those of the neighbouring countries and the Middle East Quartet, to advance political reconciliation in Libya. Those measures of external support must be coordinated in a comprehensive and strategic manner to resolve the situation in Libya under the auspices of the United Nations.

In that context, we highly commend the committed efforts of Special Representative Salamé to seek a political settlement. The rounds of talks that were envisaged by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the joint drafting committee are critical, and we therefore urge the Libyan political forces to cooperate constructively with Special Representative Salamé.

Post-conflict reconstruction, following the settlement of the crisis in Libya through political and diplomatic means and an inclusive inter-Libyan dialogue, will be most critical. In that sense, we positively assess the steps taken by the Special Representative to ensure the return of the United Nations Mission to Libya. That will mobilize more active work and engagement on the ground, with various players from Libyan society.

Once again, we emphasize that the solution to the conflict must be primarily and solely peaceful; a political agreement is the only viable option for reconciliation. At the same time, the initiative for and ownership of political processes and solutions must come from the Libyans themselves, who must determine their own future. But this political process will take hold only if there are measures to improve the socioeconomic conditions that will positively impact the political process and stability in the country. Those measures must be accompanied by steps to unite all Libyan parties under the legitimate and effectively functioning institutions of power. Their absence would create a vacuum and a fertile environment for the activities of extremists and terrorist groups.

We are extremely concerned at the high level of impunity and the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law being perpetrated by the different parties to the conflict. As we heard last week from the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (see S/PV.8091), the security situation in Libya remains a matter of great concern and a threat to international peace and security.

We are also concerned about the dire situation of migrants. We share the concerns of the Special Representative on the prevalence of irregular migration and the revenue it generates for smuggler

networks. Such activities have proven to be a direct threat to stability in several parts of Libya. Hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees often suffer abuse and detention in inhumane conditions. It is clear that we need to bring a halt to that by clamping down on smugglers and having a concerted migration policy. At tomorrow's debate, we will discuss the root causes of migration flows that adversely affect the security situation in the Mediterranean.

We believe that an early settlement of the situation in Libya will reduce the level of migration flows across the country. Of particular importance is the task of providing humanitarian assistance to the population in dire need, whose grave plight must not be overlooked in our pursuit of a dialogue between the various political forces in the country. In that vein, it is necessary to emphasize the need to ensure respect for human rights and prevent attempts of to illegally exploit migrants. We therefore welcome the desire of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to expand its activities in Libya to ensure the protection of the rights of refugees.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): Mr. President, your presence and that of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya, Mr. Mohamed Siala, underscore the importance of this briefing. We also thank Special Representative Salamé and Ambassador Skoog for their briefings.

The United States joins the many others around this table in offering our full support for Special Representative Salamé's many efforts. The United States commends all of his work to reinvigorate the political process in Libya and to help the Libyan people achieve political reconciliation. It should be clear from this meeting today that he has the strong backing of the Security Council. There is a real opportunity here for Libya to turn the page on years of strife. Libya's leaders can put the country on the road to greater stability and economic prosperity by fully engaging with the United Nations political process. Now is the time for all political actors to show leadership and to take decisive steps towards peace.

We as members of the Council must also use all of our collective influence to support Libyans on that path. Of course, the road to peace is not always direct, and any mediation process will face setbacks. We are confident that those obstacles can be overcome through the international community's unified support to Special Representative Salamé and the United Nations-facilitated political process. All of us must speak in one voice in emphasizing the central role of the United Nations. We look forward to maintaining close cooperation with Special Representative Salame as he continues to implement the action plan that the Council unanimously endorsed.

We also recognize the leadership of Prime Minister Faiez Serraj and the Government of National Accord in advancing political reconciliation in Libya. As the United Nations action plan rightly envisions, the ultimate goal must be to help Libyans prepare for elections that will be broadly accepted. Elections should take place when the political groundwork is in place and when security conditions allow. Political dialogue is the only way forward in Libya. Any attempt to impose a military solution will only further destabilize Libya, play into the hands of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and other terrorist groups, and undermine efforts to address the challenge of migration.

The Libyan people have suffered for far too long. Libyans have made clear that they are tired of insecurity and of spoilers undermining political transitions. Spoilers in Libya must not block or delay reconciliation any longer. That includes any attempt to undermine the integrity of the Libyan Government and Libya's core economic institutions. Some parties have asserted that the Libyan Political Agreement expires on the two-year anniversary of its signing on 17 December. The international community must reject those claims definitively. They will benefit no one but political spoilers who think that, by dragging their feet and running down the clock, they can bypass the United Nations-facilitated political process. The Libyan Political Agreement remains the only valid framework throughout Libya's transitional period. We all want a swift political resolution to the conflict, but imposing false deadlines will backfire.

Special Representative Salame announced the United Nations action plan in September. We must ensure that he has the time and support necessary to implement it. Any political and security vacuum will only undermine the reconciliation process and further destabilize Libya. We are concerned about recent increases in fighting in certain parts of Libya. The United States is particularly concerned about the recent air strike in Derna, which is a city in dire need of immediate and unfettered humanitarian access. We also join the Government of National Accord in condemning

the uncovering of a mass grave in Al-Abyar, where 36 people were found shot to death. Those who are responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law must be held accountable. The United States is also concerned about the tense security situation in western Libya, including in Zawiyah and Warshafanah. Any destabilizing military activity could escalate quickly into significant armed civil conflict.

Finally, turning to sanctions, we want to focus on the challenge of illegal smuggling of crude oil and petroleum products from Libya. The Council, at the request of the Government of National Accord, has repeatedly condemned those illicit transactions. Earlier this year, the Council designated two vessels, the *Capricorn* and the *Lynn S*, for their involvement in illegal fuel smuggling. Those vessels remain sanctioned. Therefore, we remind all Member States, particularly those in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, that those vessels must not be permitted to enter their ports. We also reiterate that the flag States of those vessels must fulfil their obligation to direct the ships not to load, transport or discharge their cargo.

Looking ahead, the United States believes that now is a crucial opportunity for Libyans to make real progress towards political reconciliation. Special Representative Salamé and the international community are aligned behind that objective. Now is the moment for Libya's leaders to engage in good faith with the Special Representative. The United States will work to mobilize the international community against anyone who disrupts the United Nations process, but we hope that Libyans will be able to put their differences aside for the sake of their country's future. It is long past time for Libya to rebuild its institutions and its economy. The United States urges all Libyans in the east, west and south to come together in a shared effort to ensure Libya's security and prosperity.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I thank the Minister Siala for his presence. I want to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Salamé for his important briefing today and for all his efforts to restore peace in Libya. My special appreciation also goes to Ambassador Skoog for his effective Chairmanship of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. We look forward to the important statement to be delivered by Mr. Siala, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Libya.

I would like to highlight the following points.

First, Ukraine continues to believe that the conflict in Libya has no military solution. It can be resolved only through a genuine dialogue, in which all stakeholders must participate in good faith and without preconditions. In that regard, we welcome the recent engagement of Special Representative Salamé with the parties to advance the implementation of the United Nations action plan for the resumption of an inclusive Libyan-owned political process, which was endorsed by the Council in presidential statement S/PRST/2017/19, on 10 October. In particular, I would like to refer to several meetings of a joint drafting committee in Tunis and to other meetings in the region that sought to discuss amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement, which, in our view, remains the only viable framework for ending the current crisis. In that regard, we call on all parties involved to continue those consultations until all outstanding issues are resolved. Any attempt to undermine the objectives of the transition period in Libya are unacceptable and should be rejected.

Secondly, my delegation is extremely concerned by the ongoing insecurity in Libya. The warring parties must refrain from any actions that may further aggravate the security situation and disrupt the unification of the Libyan army and national security forces under a unified and civilian Government. Ukraine also takes very seriously the threat of terrorism in Libya. It has not only an internal dimension, but a broader regional impact. In that regard, Ukraine supports the efforts of the Government of National Accord to counter terrorist threats and to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other extremist groups in Libya.

The ISIL attack in Misrata on 4 October against a courthouse and the establishment by that organization of additional checkpoints near Sirte are a clear signal that the continuing fragmentation of Libyan society, coupled with internal strife and armed confrontations, is the single biggest obstacle to conducting a targeted, consistent and persistent anti-ISIL campaign in that country. Thus, it is now more necessary than ever that the international community continue its support to the Government of National Accord in its efforts to unite the country and restore law and order.

Thirdly, we are no less concerned over the deteriorating human rights situation in Libya. Numerous reports alert us to ongoing human rights abuses and violations, such as unlawful killings,

kidnappings, forced disappearances and torture. Recent discoveries of bodies bearing signs of having been shot and tortured are extremely troubling. The other development that Ukraine is worried about is abuses against migrants and refugees in official and unofficial detention centres in Libya, which include arbitrary detentions, cases of torture, rape and other ill-treatment. In our view, the international community must develop a comprehensive strategy on how to better protect those vulnerable groups. I am sure that our discussion tomorrow will contribute to that endeavour.

Finally, I would like to reiterate once again Ukraine's support for the efforts of Special Representative Salamé and to commend all the men and women of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, who continue to carry out their duties in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank you, Mr. President, for joining us here in the Council today and for presiding over our work. We also wish to thank Mr. Mohamed Siala, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya; Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL); and Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, for their detailed briefings.

The stabilization and resolution of the protracted conflict in Libya remains a priority for the Security Council. Uruguay calls on the all parties in the Libyan conflict to be calm and moderate, while we reiterate that the only solution to the conflict is through political means and negotiation among the parties. The way out will be through all Libyans, the product of inclusive negotiations that enable a scheduled political process leading to the holding of elections while protecting the country from any authoritarianism.

In that sense, we support the action plan presented by Secretary-General António Guterres and his Special Representative to revive the political process in Libya under the facilitation and leadership of the United Nations. The Security Council should continue giving its support to Prime Minister Serraj and the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord to enable them to fulfil the Libyan Political Agreement.

Uruguay has always stated that it welcomes any unilateral, regional or multilateral initiative that proposes solutions to this and any other conflict. In that connection, we commend the meeting convened by France in July that led to an agreement on the cessation of hostilities and on the holding of elections in 2018. We hope that what was agreed on at that occasion will be carried out. We also welcome the meetings of the joint drafting committee of members of the House of Representatives and the High State Council at the request of the Special Representative. Those are all transcendental measure to promote trust and progress towards national reconciliation, which must be followed by specific actions on the ground.

We encourage Mr. Salamé to work closely with the Libyan authorities to agree on the amendments required in the Libyan Political Agreement so that the Agreement can be used as a framework to bring peace and unity to the country, to extend the control of the legitimate Libyan Government to the whole territory, and to urgently meet the multiple challenges it faces. That is the only way the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord will be able to extend its authority, curb the new wave of violence, preserve its legitimacy and provide security and essential services to the Libyan people.

I would like to highlight here the fight against terrorism, which still has centres of power in Libya, as well as the need to address the serious humanitarian crisis and to cooperate with the European authorities to tackle trafficking in persons and arms smuggling. The violence that continues over vast swathes of the Libyan territory — particularly in Derna, which was subjected to siege and air strikes costing the lives of dozens of civilians — can only lead to escalating the conflict and undermining efforts under way to reactivate the Libyan Political Agreement.

The reigning chaos in recent years in Libya has fomented actions of extremists and armed militias, who have taken advantage of the institutional and security vacuum to carry out their criminal and terrorist activities that affect not only Libya, but also its neighbours in the region and beyond. From a geopolitical standpoint, achieving peace and stability in Libya is crucial for the Maghreb and other regions in the continent.

We remain concerned about the desperate situation facing migrants who use Libya as a country of transit on the way to Europe. Hundreds of thousands of sub-Saharan migrants are in Libya as we speak, hoping

for a chance to attempt to cross the Mediterranean. They are subject to abuse and very serious violations of their human rights. In the last few hours, there have been reports once again on the sale of slaves in Libya. That is a reprehensible fact that must be unanimously condemned.

We reiterate that in seeking solutions to this problem, we should prioritize the human rights of migrants and refugees, avoiding treating them as criminals. Only the political and institutional stabilization of Libya will allow for any significant reduction in that phenomenon.

To conclude, we confirm our support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and for the role of UNSMIL. We encourage him to continue working closely with Prime Minister Serraj and the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord and with the other parties in Libya in order to agree upon an appropriate framework to address the country's current situation, pave the way for a revival of the political process and reduce violence. The new Libyan Political Agreement, together with the United Nations action plan, will have to be a central part of the solution to the urgent and huge challenges facing Libya. They include fighting terrorism and addressing the very serious humanitarian, economic and security crises affecting millions of persons.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We are pleased to see you, Mr. President, presiding over this meeting of the Council in a demonstration of the importance you attach to the situation in Libya. Let me take this opportunity to thank you for the very humane way your country has been handling the migrant issue, for which we are very appreciative. We also welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya with us this morning. We appreciate Mr. Salmé, Special Representative of the Secretary General, for his briefing and diplomatic efforts in the ongoing search for peace and stability in Libya. The analysis and the updates we received from the Special Representative was truly of high quality. We have drawn confidence from his comprehensive and objective analysis.

As the representative of France said, the time has come for this Council to speak with one voice on Libya. As we know, that applies to other situations as well. We also thank Ambassador Skoog for his briefing and his efforts as the Chair of the Libya Sanctions Committee. We know that whatever tasks Ambassador Skoog is entrusted with, he discharges them with a great sense of responsibility. Given the many human rights violations, much is expected from the Committee he chairs, and we are confident that he will make the Committee as effective as possible.

The deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in Libya, including the recent attacks targeting civilians and civilian institutions, continues to be of serious concern. We take this opportunity to express our solidarity and sympathy with the people and Government of Libya. We reiterate our conviction that the multifaceted crisis in Libya, including illegal migration and refugees, as well as illegal armed groups, can be addressed sustainably only through a comprehensive political solution facilitated by the United Nations.

In that regard, the United Nations action plan, with its sequential components, provides another opportunity to end the current political impasse and to meet the legitimate demands of all Libyans. We welcome the continued efforts of the Special Representative to engage all Libyans on the basis of the United Nations action plan, including by bringing together the main political actors, so as to amend the Libyan Political Agreement, which remains the only viable framework to resolve the Libyan crisis.

We particularly welcome the progress made in Tunis at the meeting of the Libyan stakeholders under the auspices of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. We believe that that process is absolutely critical to helping to overcome the current political impasse and to pave the way for durable peace, stability and reconciliation in Libya through an all-inclusive dialogue. However, we understand the challenge in addressing the points of divergence and, hence, the need for the meaningful and constructive engagement of all Libyans with the greatest sense of urgency and national vision in order to reach a common understanding and to move the process forward.

Clearly, two issues, among others, would continue to be critical. As Special Representative Salamé has stressed, there should be no vacuum; hence, the need to uphold the Libyan Political Agreement. The other issue relates to the need to make the process genuinely Libyan-owned. Of course, there is no military solution to the Libyan problem.

The international community, particularly the Council, should send a strong and united message to pressure all parties to stop the violence and to engage in

an inclusive and sustained political dialogue. The role of the neighbouring countries of Libya in the pursuit of peace, security and reconciliation is, indeed, critical within the framework of a Libyan-owned process. The African Union also has an important role to play in the process. Ultimately, however, the solution to the crisis in Libya lies primarily in the hands of the Libyans themselves and the role of the international community is to provide effective support to the Libyan efforts. We therefore hope that all Libyans will constructively engage in the inclusive political process, as set out in the action plan, and demonstrate a spirit of compromise in order to achieve concrete results that could facilitate the full implementation of the plan.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya.

Mr. Siala (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. President, my dear friend Angelino Alfano, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to thank Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, for his valuable briefing. My thanks also go to Mr. Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, for his briefing, in which he touched on the most recent developments with regard to the sanctions on Libya in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

I would like to reaffirm that the Government of National Accord is eager to support all United Nations efforts to assist the Libyan parties in reaching full agreement on various contentious issues in order to put an end to the crisis in Libya, stop the bloodshed and alleviate the suffering of the Libyan people.

As the Council knows, the suffering of the Libyan people increases daily on various fronts in the light of the deteriorating security situation and the political divide in the country. Despite the serious attempts of some national parties to resolve the situation and to overcome the ongoing impasse, differing political interests among the actors have led to the continuing instability and prevent the Government of National Accord from discharging its duties, in particular those relating to the provision of basic services to citizens. In that regard, we hope that international and regional efforts will continue until a political consensus among all Libyan parties is reached in order to achieve peace and stability in the country.

It would be remiss of me not to highly commend the concerted efforts of Mr. Salamé in recently organizing the round of talks in the sisterly country of Tunisia, where he brought together representatives of the House of Representatives and the High State Council in order to agree on a consensus text and to amend the Libyan Political Agreement, signed on 15 December 2015. In that regard, we hope that the efforts of the Special Representative will continue to bring an end to that divide and to unite all Libyans, and that rapid solutions are achieved in order to overcome the current obstacles, in the light of the current standstill, to reach an understanding between the House of Representatives and the High State Council, and to organize and hold elections and the referendum on the Constitution as soon as possible next year. We, in turn, have already taken some steps to support the High National Electoral Commission so as to hold elections in the near future.

Despite the great challenges in Libya, the Government of National Accord has spared no effort in addressing all those issues in a balanced and transparent way by involving all Libyan actors, both political and military, so as to bridge the gap and to unite Libya on the basis of its national interests. That is the national duty for which the Government of National Accord was established — namely, to achieve reconciliation, build civilian and democratic State institutions, and provide services to the Libyan people, who are exhausted by conflict and the political divide. We underscore the fact that there is no military solution to the crisis in Libya. There is a need to unite the military and security institutions so that they come under the civilian executive authority.

In that regard, we welcome the recent talks in Cairo, hosted by Eygpt, which led to a meeting between the military leaders of the Government of National Accord and their counterparts in the eastern part of the country. We hope that that will give rise to an effective proposal on distancing the military institutions from the political coaflict so that we can focus on combating terrorism and on protecting the State.

The Government of National Accord condemns the recent events targeting representatives of the Government of National Accord and the recent decisions of parallel bodies, such as the detention and isolation of mayors of certain provinces and other bodies that are

in contact with the Government of National Accord, leading to the issue of an arrest warrant for the Mayor of Tobruk. We strongly condemn such acts, which counteract our efforts to provide services to all Libyan cities and to shield citizens from the political conflict. Such acts also violate the resolutions of the Security Council, the League of Arab States, the African Union, the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which call for an end to cooperation with those parallel bodies.

The Government of National Accord also condemns violence among Libyans and the policy of settling accounts by force and detaining people on the basis of identity, including abductions, torture, extrajudicial killings and other acts that are tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The perpetrators must be handed over to the legitimate authorities so that they can be held accountable.

The Government of National Accord condemns the use of violence against any unarmed civilian or any step to harm civilians in any Libyan city.

In that vein, we recall the bombing of civilians in Wadi Nina on 20 September and the criminal air strikes on Derna on 30 October, which killed many innocent people, most of them women and children. We categorically reject such criminal acts. We contacted the Security Council at that time through the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations, expressing our condemnation and rejection of those criminal acts. We asked the Council for assistance to investigate this terrorist act, determine the circumstances surrounding it and identify the perpetrators. Once again, we call on the Security Council to convene a special meeting to consider that incident and take appropriate action. We also call on the Council and the international community to assist in lifting the two-year siege imposed on Derna and open humanitarian corridors in order to ensure access to humanitarian aid for civilians.

Due to the deteriorating security situation, my country is suffering from many challenges that have undermined the capacities of the Libyan people, including the smuggling of oil and its derivatives by criminal armed gangs involved in numerous illicit activities, such as human trafficking. Recently, my Government requested that the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya renew the listing of two vessels for attempting to illicitly export Libyan oil derivatives.

In that regard, we hope that the flag countries will provide assistance to determine the circumstances of that incident, prevent such illicit acts and return the smuggled shipments to the legitimate Libyan authorities. We also note that lifting the ban on the listed vessels, despite their failure to comply with the law or return the smuggled shipments to the legitimate Libyan authorities, would certainly encourage the smugglers to pursue the same course. We also reaffirm the right of the Libyan national judiciary to investigate, indict and prosecute the perpetrators of those acts and to claim reparations from the countries concerned through international justice.

Turning to the frozen Libyan assets — an issue that we have addressed before the Council more than once — everyone is already aware of the concerns of the Government of National Accord. From the outset, resolution 1970 (2011) has reflected the international community's desire to protect the wealth of the Libyan people. It was meant not to punish Libya, but to preserve Libyan assets from being squandered during the revolution and transitional period after the fall of the previous regime. Thus, it was intended to last only for a specific period of time that and did not foresee that the protracted Libyan crisis would endure for more than six years. The frozen assets regime therefore has a negative impact on the interests of the Libyan people and future generations.

I note that our Permanent Mission to the United Nations has been communicating with the Security Council since March 2016 and repeated its request in June 2017, in two Security Council documents — S/2016/275 and S/2017/543 — in addition to the letter by His Excellency the President of the Presidential Council of the Government of National Accord, Mr. Faiez Serraj, addressed to the President of the Security Council and contained in document S/2017/629, on the regrettable state of the frozen Libyan assets under the current sanctions regime. The Libyan State is not asking for the freeze on the assets to be lifted, but calling for a particular formula that would assist it in managing its wealth and investments, while frozen, so that they are not gradually lost, as is the case year after year in significant amounts. We therefore call upon the Security Council once again to address that issue and stop such losses as soon as possible so as to thereby preserve the assets and wealth of the Libyan people.

To conclude, we note the high-level meeting held by the Secretary-General on 20 September, at which the

vital role of the United Nations in resolving the Libyan crisis was stressed. In that regard, the Government of National Accord renews its commitment to and cooperation with the United Nations through the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, in order to put an end to the political division and fragmentation in Libya and open new horizons that will focus on finding a decisive solution to address the suffering of the Libyan people owing to the deteriorating services, or lack thereof, and economic and financial distress.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8105

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8105th meeting

Thursday, 16 November 2017, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will be very brief. My delegation would like to place on record its support for draft resolution S/2017/933, submitted by the Russian Federation and China.

The President: The Council has taken note of the Bolivian delegation's support for draft resolution S/2017/933.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2017/933 and S/2017/962, which contain the texts of two draft resolutions, respectively.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, we would like to request that draft resolution S/2017/933, submitted by the Russian Federation, be put to the vote second and that draft resolution S/2017/962, submitted by the United States of America, be put to the vote first. We know that the United States has told you and the Council that we should vote on our draft resolution first, in accordance with rule 32 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure. We do not agree with that reasoning, however. It is impossible for our draft resolution to be put to the vote first without our permission, for the following reasons.

The priority provided for in rule 32, on the consideration of draft resolutions in accordance with the order of their submission, allows for the possibility and right that whoever submits a draft resolution first can request that it be put to a vote first in cases when there is a counter draft before the Council, which in this case is the draft resolution submitted by the United States. However, that is a privilege that one can refuse to avail oneself of. Submission under rule 32 is not the same as publication in blue. The two terms are often confused, in fact, but incorrectly. If we follow the rules of procedure, submission should include publication in blue and the request for a vote. The United States delegation was the first to request a vote, and in that case our draft resolution should be put to the vote second, because we asked for the vote after them. We therefore insist on our draft resolution being put to the vote second.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to read out the first part of rule 32 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, which says "Principal motions and draft resolutions shall have precedence in the order of their submission."

My Russian friends have chosen once again to say that they go according to procedure, except when it applies to something they do not like. What we have to do is go according to procedure. Rule 32 spells out exactly how that order should be. We do not need the Russians coming in and saying "We do not like the answer to this, so we want you to change it". I think that the Council should be disciplined, abide by rule 32 of the provisional rules of procedure and take the politics out of the situation.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are not playing political games here. On the other hand, perhaps we are, because if we were not playing political games, we would not be having this discussion today. But while we have studied this issue, and the Council's practice on it varies, we will not delve into that at the moment, as we see no purpose in getting mired in procedural discussions. We merely ask that you, Mr. President, put the question to a procedural vote. We propose that the Russian draft resolution (S/2017/933) be put to the vote second, after the draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2017/962).

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Rule 32 of the provisional rules of procedure states that principal motions and draft resolutions shall have precedence in the order of their submission.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Let us put it to a procedural vote.

The President: I thank Mr. Nebenzia and Mrs. Haley for the points they have made. In our understanding, in accordance with rule 32 of the provisional rules of procedure, which states that principal motions and draft resolutions shall have precedence in the order of their submission, the draft resolution submitted by Russia (S/2017/933) should therefore be put to the vote first. The representative of the Russian Federation has requested a procedural vote on the question of whether the Russian draft resolution should be put to the vote second and the United States draft resolution first (S/2017/962).

I shall put the procedural motion to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Russian Federation

Against:

France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Egypt, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Uruguay

The President: The proposal received 3 votes in favour, 7 votes against and 5 abstentions. The procedural motion was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In this case, Mr. President, in accordance with rule 35 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, which says that a motion or draft resolution can be withdrawn at any time as long as no vote has been taken on it, the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document S/2017/933 wish to withdraw it.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2017/962, submitted by France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Against:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Russian Federation

Abstaining:

China, Egypt

The President: There were 11 votes in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations gives the Council the responsibility to

> "determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations ... to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Among the greatest threats to peace and security is the use of chemical weapons. That is why for more than two decades, the international community has outlawed the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. For almost half a decade, the Council has worked tirelessly to put an end to the use of such weapons in Syria.

But for the tenth time regarding Syria and for the fourth time regarding chemical weapons, Russia has actively obstructed the international community's ability to identify the perpetrators of chemical-weapon attacks. Russia has issued vetoes before in order to prevent Council action and ensure accountability in Syria. Russia has invented reasons not to support a mechanism that it helped created, because it did not like its scientific conclusions. Russia has acted to obstruct those investigations many times, but today it strikes a deep blow. Russia has killed the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), which has the overwhelming support of the Council.

By eliminating our ability to identify the attackers, Russia has undermined our ability to deter future attacks. Al-Assad and ISIS will no longer be on notice for the use of chemical weapons as a result of Russia's actions today. The message to anyone listening is clear. In effect, Russia accepts the use of chemical weapons in Syria. How then can we trust Russia's supposed support

for peace in Syria? How can anyone take Russia's proposal for political talks in Sochi seriously?

I have lost count of how many times I have stood in this Chamber and implored Russia to do the right thing in Syria. But instead Russia has played games. Russia wants a mechanism, but not an independent one. It wants reporting, but not if it blames Syria. If Council members pay attention, they will notice that the Russians think the JIM works great when it finds the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant at fault for chemical weapons, but when the perpetrator is one of its own friends, the problem is suddenly the JIM, not its friend that committed the crime.

But Russia knows how bad it looks to defend a regime's use of chemical weapons, so it attempts to create a distraction. In this case, the distraction is the draft resolution that it offered. The draft resolution would also allow Russia or any other member to micromanage the JIM and it would put the Council in the absurd position of putting the fox in charge of the henhouse, having countries such as Russia and Syria dictate how, when and where we investigate the use of chemical weapons.

In recent weeks, the United States has taken great pains to work with Russia in drafting our draft resolution. It is a shame that we found out today they had planned to veto it the entire time. We revised our draft resolution three times to incorporate Russia's concerns and those of all Council members. At the same time, Russia refused to hold a single consultation on its own draft, while we held many consultations. It is clear now that the only concern Russia had was that the JIM even existed and that it was capable of finding the truth. Russia had hoped to bury the truth about chemical weapons in Syria, but it has failed. We know who is behind these attacks. The JIM has provided that information time and time again. The United States will not give up on trying to achieve justice for the victims in Syria.

Tragically, these attacks are ongoing. New cases are being alleged. Russia has destroyed our best tool for attributing these attacks, but it is not our only tool for ending this barbaric practice. There is the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. There is the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, which is mandated to generate the evidence to bring fair and independent criminal proceedings against those who commit atrocities in Syria.

And if and when it is necessary, there is the United States of America. Regardless of what its Russian protectors do in the Security Council, the Al-Assad regime should be on clear notice that the United States does not accept Syria's use of chemical weapons. As we did in April, we will do it again if we must — we will defend the international standard against chemical-weapons use. It would be wise for the Al-Assad regime to heed this warning.

The Security Council created the JIM in a rare moment of unity. I thank the other members of the Council for their support, but what a shame it is that Russia has brought us to this point. What a shame it is that Russia has revealed itself to be a Government whose allegiance is to the Syrian regime, not to the truth or the protection of innocent civilians. Russia may have succeeded in silencing one independent voice in Syria today, but there are others that will carry on this work, and we will not stop until there is justice for the victims and accountability for the perpetrators of the chemical-weapons attacks in Syria.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France is appalled by today's vote and the result of the Russian veto. This result is particularly serious in and of itself, but it is also potentially fraught with consequences for the future. The situation we are confronted with — the proven use of chemical weapons in Syria — is indeed one of those case studies that should provoke a unanimous and immediate mobilization of the Security Council.

All conditions are there for that result. Faced with the despicable use of chemical weapons in Syria, the Security Council created the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to establish facts and responsibilities. In keeping with its mandate, this investigative mechanism works tirelessly with undeniable professionalism and impartiality. It leads to clear, well-documented conclusions that unambiguously prove the responsibility of the Syrian regime in several cases and that of Da'esh in others.

Contrary to what the professionals of confusion would have us believe, we are not in a gray zone here. The situation in all its horror is crystal clear. In the

twenty-first century, terrorists — and a State — are intentionally using chemical weapons to kill women and children, among others. Their faces disfigured by an atrocious death will long haunt our memories and our consciences.

And in the face of this situation, one of the major players in the international community — one of the major partners of my country, to which we are bound by so many links — has decided for the fourth time to veto the renewal of the Mechanism in order to protect the Damascus regime. Such an attitude leaves those who deeply respect Russia speechless. This cannot be the last word of that great country whose role in the international balance of power is decisive.

It is even more true that the raison d'être of the JIM is more justified than ever. More than 60 cases of use need to be examined. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has already confirmed for us the use of sarin gas on 30 March in Latamneh. That is why France supported the draft resolution prepared by the United States and would like to acknowledge the efforts of our American friends who worked with all the delegations to propose the renewal of the JIM by presenting a balanced text which contains substantial concessions aimed precisely at trying to bring members of the Council together.

Let us carefully assess the seriousness of the issues together. Beyond Syria, what is at stake first and foremost is the safeguarding of the most basic human rights and the fight against impunity. The use of chemical weapons is not only morally untenable and legally unacceptable; it is also a terrifying step backward for all of us, as the Syrian regime and Da'esh are trying to outdo one another to see who is the more horrific and barbaric.

Let us also not forget that these atrocities are war crimes, and they have made chemical terrorism into a dangerous reality. What is also at stake today is the future of the international non-proliferation regime. While international non-proliferation regimes are one of the major achievements of recent decades, we should not let the most successful of them — the chemical regime — be undermined by political calculation and division. It would be a deadly precedent for the other non-proliferation regimes and an irresponsible attitude for which we would all pay a high price.

The use of chemical weapons by anyone is not just a moral abomination against the most basic principles of humanity; to look away — to accept the use of chemical weapons in Syria without reacting — would amount in fact to giving a blank check or a green light to the proliferation and the use of these weapons elsewhere and would create, moreover, the most favourable soil for the very chemical terrorism that all of us fear.

We created the JIM upon the joint initiative of Russia and the United States in order to transcend political disagreements and establish the truth. That is why we established it. It is therefore a moral failure and a strategic mistake on the part of those who renege on their word and commitments when the truth comes to light.

The JIM was never a Western tool. It belongs to the entire international community and we are duty-bound to strengthen it. The Mechanism cannot and must not be held to ransom by political squabbles, or worse, tactical games. Undermining the JIM is tantamount to playing with fire, and could, in the long-term, jeopardize the non-proliferation regime, in particular with regard to chemical weapons, which we all built block by block. The JIM should be able to conduct its activities without preconditions or interference.

A political solution alone will enable us to put an end to the horrendous conflict in Syria, through a negotiated and credible democratic transition, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva Communiqué. However, there will be no sustainable peace in Syria in an environment of impunity. Peace will depend on justice and justice requires the means for determining those responsible for committing atrocities in Khan Shaykhun, and other chemical attacks, who must be held accountable for their criminal acts.

I would like to share a profound belief with the Council. Today's vote cannot be the final word. France will not resign itself to failure or resort to playing political games that will not address the current challenges. Given the gravity of such challenges, we have no right to give up or to lose heart. The Council can count on France's continued efforts in all relevant forums to combat impunity in Syria and elsewhere, and to promote, forever and everywhere, the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime on which our security depends.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): Today's meeting is indeed a regrettable one. I hope that the victims of chemical weapons attacks have not been watching our debate so far, and, in particular, the vote on today's draft

resolution, which we strongly supported. I must say that it is highly regrettable that the Council has again failed to unite behind an extension of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). Many commendable efforts have been made, in particular in the past few days to make that happen. The Mechanism was unanimously set up by the Security Council and with a clear objective. That objective remains; so too does opposition. Nonetheless, allow me to reiterate a few points.

We unequivocally and in the strongest terms condemn the repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria. The Joint Investigative Mechanism and its objective, impartial and independent investigations have our full support. We have confidence in its professionalism, technical expertise and comprehensive forensic analysis. We have provided technical expertise and financial support. The mandate of the JIM must urgently be extended for the following well-known reasons.

First, the JIM plays a critical role in protecting the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, as the French Ambassador just stated.

Secondly, there are still some 60 cases of alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria being examined by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that could be referred to the JIM. The sarin attack in Lataminah on 30 March, cited in the most recent report of the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2017/931), is a case in point. It is our duty as members of the Council to do what we can to enable all of those attacks to be investigated, and to hold those responsible to account. Chemical weapons use is illegal; it constitutes a threat to international peace and security and can amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. There can be no impunity for such crimes.

Thirdly, we believe that the JIM has an important deterrent effect. The risks of new chemical weapons attacks in Syria might increase on our watch if we do not renew the JIM.

We have listened carefully to all arguments made by members of the Council over the past few weeks. It is our assessment that there should be room to reach compromise. The JIM was set up by the Council with a very clear objective. That objective remains. Renewing the JIM's mandate should be possible, but it can be achieved only if the Council unites. We believe that all efforts to reach agreement must continue. We will support all serious and genuine attempts to renew the JIM's mandate. We will continue to engage to find a way forward.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine co-sponsored and voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/2017/962 on the basis of the following position.

Continuous allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, which cause enormous suffering and are a blatant violation of international law, require an uncompromising and firm response from the Council, not only by condemning such horrible crimes, but by taking effective action, including through mobilizing all tools available to that end and without undermining their efficiency to ensure accountability. Ukraine commends the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in executing its mandate, based on the principles of impartiality, objectivity and independence. It is the only tool at the Council's disposal with the mandate to identify the organizers and perpetrators of chemical weapons use. No outstanding differences or opinions on the Syrian chemical file should be used to justify actions aimed at destroying the JIM, as doing that effectively amounts to shielding those responsible for atrocious crimes from justice.

Today the Council again failed to exercise its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. The Council's continuous inability to address chemical attacks in Syria is leading to further impunity and sending a signal to perpetrators that they can get away with murder. Despite overwhelming support, it has already become routine that one Council member continues to block each and every decision that could move us closer to bringing the perpetrators of atrocities in Syria to justice.

Playing the JIM card in one's political game is utterly cynical and cannot be understood or accepted by responsible members of the international community. I wish to sincerely commend the dedication and flexibility shown by the delegation of the United States, which made every effort to preserve the JIM, including by inserting the maximum number of concerns from various Council members into the final text, while preserving the primary part of the JIM mandate, which

is investigating and identifying those responsible for chemical weapons use in Syria. But, regrettably, different approaches to the subject are not the issue. The issue is that of a single-minded pursuit to destroy an international system built around respect for norms and principles of international law, which we, and our predecessors, have all so carefully constructed for many decades.

Despite the results of the vote, I believe we must continue our joint efforts in defending and restoring respect for international law. I wish to reiterate that the time for justice will come.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Today we have reached the end of the road for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). It was a road that all members of the Security Council set out on together two years ago. We did so in the hope that those using chemical weapons in Syria would be identified and held to account. Thanks to today's veto, that hope has suffered a serious blow.

Under the current and previous leadership panels, the staff of the Mechanism worked patiently and diligently to uncover the truth. I pay tribute to them today. Thanks to their efforts, the world now knows what happened in Talmenes, Sarmin, Marea, Qamenas, Khan Shaykhun and Umm Hawsh.

Let us make no mistake — the JIM has succeeded. It is Russia that has failed. It has failed in its duties as a permanent member of the Security Council. It has failed as a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention. It has failed as a supposed supporter of peace in Syria.

We have been here before. This is not the first time this year that we have attempted to renew the JIM's mandate. Less than a month ago, we all sat in this very Chamber and watched as Russia vetoed a simple technical rollover of the mandate (see S/PV.8073) — a rollover that did not judge any party or add any conditions. We have worked tirelessly through extensive consultations between Council members to try to understand Russia's concerns and find a renewal on which we could all agree. The United States draft, in favour of which we are proud to have voted, was balanced and reasonable.

Russia, on the other hand, has refused to engage constructively. Last month, it quoted fantasy and fiction in the Chamber to justify its veto. But in negotiations, its experts made abundantly clear why they would not support the JIM's renewal. Put simply, they cannot, or rather they will not accept any investigation that attributes blame to their Syrian allies, no matter how robust the investigation, no matter how clear and solid the evidence. Russia will say that it engaged, that it put forward an alternative text, yet its text sought only to undermine and discredit what has already been painstakingly demonstrated — that the Syrian regime is responsible for the blatant repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people.

The seventh report of the JIM (S/2017/904, annex), as we heard last week from the Head of the Leadership Panel (see S/PV.8090), details the thorough methodology of the investigation. Its consideration of alternative hypotheses, the careful corroboration of sources and the use of independent, internationally recognized forensic experts for analysis of data. Faced with this clear, careful consideration and conclusion, Russia made a string of entirely destructive demands in its text and attempted to weaken significantly the remit of the JIM. It demanded that the JIM take samples from a Syrian airbase, when the JIM has made crystal clear why doing so would not advance the investigation. It demanded that the JIM visit Khan Shaykhun, where it would face unacceptable risks of attack. It maligned the impartiality, experience and expertise of the JIM's staff, ignoring the thorough professional report they had produced and Russia's own original support for the group. Russia demands that the JIM listen only to Syrian-approved witnesses and Syrian accounts of events. Why should evidence from a party to the conflict accused of war crimes carry more weight than the corroborated testimony of victims and observers and the cold laboratory analysis of physical evidence?

Thanks to Russia's veto today, Da'esh fighters will be joining Al-Assad in celebration. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is currently investigating other cases. This vote means that the JIM will not investigate who is responsible for these atrocious crimes. Russia's transparent use of its Security Council status to block this investigation again shows that, as a party to the conflict, it cannot credibly play a leading role in the political process, such as convening the Syrian parties in Sochi.

Most of us here are totally committed to upholding the norm against the use of chemical weapons. We will not be stopped by what has happened today. We will keep working to identify and bring to account those

who have used these vile weapons and to deter those who might think of doing so in the future. Russia once played a responsible role in securing the destruction of much of Syria's chemical arsenal and in creating the JIM. Regrettably, today the world can see that Russian policy now is to protect the Syrian State — whatever the cost to Russia's reputation.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay regrets that for the second time in less than a month, the Security Council has been unable to renew the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). In my country's view, the JIM has been an invaluable instrument for carrying out investigations for the two past years on the responsibility for incidents in Syria in which the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons established that chemical weapons had been used against the civilian population.

Time and again, we have expressed in the Chamber our total confidence in the serious, independent, impartial and objective work of the JIM, whatever the conclusions it reaches in its investigations. In fact, to date, the Mechanism has attributed responsibility for the use of banned chemical weapons to agents in the Syrian Government and to Da'esh terrorists. These are serious crimes for which there can be no impunity.

Through the JIM's investigation, we have been able to determine, in many of those cases, who was behind the use of such weapons. But once again, in February the Council was also unable to adopt a resolution to sanction the responsible parties (see S/PV.7893). That is why we reiterate our position — which is shared by the almost 120 signatory parties to the Code of Conduct promoted by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group — that Council members that enjoy veto privileges should abstain from its use in the case of atrocious crimes, such as the attacks currently under investigation by the JIM.

It is paradoxical, frustrating and even sad to see so many roadblocks to a mechanism that was established by the Council itself only two years ago (see S/PV.7501). For serious crimes, such as those the JIM tries to investigate, not investigating is tantamount to concealing. We repeat that these abhorrent crimes must not go unpunished, whoever the perpetrators. We call on all members of the Council to continue to work on garnering consensus with a view to extending the work of the Mechanism.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to echo the words of deep frustration voiced by several members of the Security Council this afternoon. This is undoubtedly a collective failure, but those who are watching can see that it was a predictable result. We all came here today prepared with our written statements knowing that we would not reach the needed consensus for the adoption of a resolution. The Security Council once again leaves a poor impression of a lack of unity on such a sensitive topic.

Bolivia reiterates its most firm and categorical condemnation of the use of chemical agents as weapons. It is an unjustifiable criminal act wherever, whenever and by whomsoever it is carried out, as its use is a serious violation of international law and a threat to international peace and security. We also note once again that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) must carry out its work in the most methodical, transparent and fundamentally depoliticized manner so as to avoid the instrumentalization of its work.

The renewal of the mandate must maintain the integrity and independence of the Mechanism. Therefore, we must consider only the purpose for which it was created through clear working methods in order to avoid mistakes of the past. Its work must be carried out in the most methodical, technical and reliable manner possible, with the help of independent, impartial, complete and conclusive investigations.

In our most recent meeting on this issue (see S/PV.8090), some delegations expressed certain technical inconsistencies in the JIM's most recent report (S/2017/904, annex). We believe that such extremes must be addressed, resolved and serve as a basis for improving the work of the Mechanism so as to prevent them in future investigations. Bolivia voted against the draft resolution contained in document S/2017/962 because it explicitly asked the JIM and the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic to travel to the scenes of incidents in order to gather more verifiable evidence in situ so as to ensure a thorough investigation.

We are committed to continuing to work towards strengthening investigation processes in a more transparent manner, and for that, we call on the Council to resolve its differences and unite its efforts

to maintain unity on such an important issue for the international community.

As we stated at the beginning of this meeting, within the framework of and in accordance with article 35 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, Bolivia supported the draft resolution (S/2017/933) presented by the Russian Federation and China. That having been said, my delegation requires the presidency to put the draft resolution to the vote, as stipulated in rule 35 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

The President: I have taken note of that request.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): Allow me to say, quite frankly, that we do not feel that what has happened today in this Chamber has been very dignifying for the Council — the organ of the United Nations with great responsibility, the primary responsibility for international peace and security. That is perhaps a signature of the times we are in. We know that the way by which the international community will succeed in controling chemical weapons and eliminating their use is for countries such as the United States and Russia to work together to ensure that that noble objective is achieved. There is no other way.

Frankly speaking, the issue has become so politicized that it seems it is becoming extremely difficult to focus on the real problem. Incidentally, we have always felt that the situation in Syria — not only on this issue, but on others as well — has always been politicized. In our view, it is not wise to blame this or that State for the logjam that we are in. All the problems we are facing appear to be the result of a lack, of failure to focus on the major issue, which is a common danger and a reflection of a much more complex issue that we are currently facing.

Allow me to explain why we decided to vote in favour of the draft resolution (S/2017/962). First of all, we are very keen to contribute to the renewal of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). We believe that it is and will continue to be useful. Sweden has explained why, and I do not want to repeat what was said.

Secondly, we had some doubts about whether it was time for the JIM to draw the conclusion it made in its seventh report (S/2017/904, annex). With regard to that issue, the United States showed sufficient flexibility, for which we were very grateful. There was therefore no reason for us not to support the American draft resolution, all the more so because that country was ready to engage with us and accept amendments, which we appreciate.

However, we are again in a stalemate, a logjam. The future of the JIM is in the balance. We only have one day to save it. We are hopeful that we will come to some consensus to ensure that the JIM will exist beyond tomorrow, for which we need the support of everybody. We hope that a technical rollover is something that we could consider. We do not believe that we have come to the end of the road; we disagree with that contention by the United Kingdom. We can still proceed and achieve something meaningful to ensure that the life of the JIM is protected and assured.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): For Kazakhstan, the fight against proliferation and the use of weapons of mass destruction remains one of the most important priorities of its foreign policy. For that reason, we are most seriously concerned about the current state of the non-proliferation regime in Syria, as well as in the region as a whole. We must recognize that the use of chemical weapons in Syria continues, with persistent threats of chemical terrorism a grave reality. In addition, many allegations on the use of chemical agents in Syria are still undisclosed.

Based on those circumstances and on our understanding of the need to preserve the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), we intended to support both draft resolutions that were to extend the mandate of the JIM. Having read its seventh report (S/2017/904, annex), we became even more convinced that the investigation should continue and that the methodology behind the investigation should be fully and strictly enforced.

However, to our great regret, we again saw an extremely disappointing picture when the Council could not act with a single voice, meaning that as a collective body, we have failed to act as one. The results of the voting clearly show, yet again, that we have to work more to be inclusive of all opinions in order to be successful. It is always important and relevant for all parties to work closely in the search for a compromise, despite the existing principled positions.

It was commendable that during the latest consultations, the United States demonstrated the

willingness to accommodate some changes. At the same time, we are also sympathetic to the concerns of the Russian delegation regarding the JIM report and its conclusions. We support the need to further improve the work of the Mechanism. But both sides must work out their differences, and we are here to make sure that we achieve a solution.

I want to emphasize once again that for Kazakhstan, the main priorities are to relentlessly continue to fight against the threat or the use of chemical weapons, in Syria as well as anywhere in the world. The situation today is that all members of the Council are convinced of the need to continue the work of the JIM. But clearly it needs to undergo some changes to meet the expectations of all member countries of the Security Council. We therefore call on all, first and foremost those countries that initiated the creation of the Mechanism, to actively continue consultations and search for mutually acceptable language, so that the Mechanism can resume its work.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): As we inevitably move towards the expiry of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), the Security Council — our Council — which is responsible, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, for the maintenance of international peace and security, is unfortunately once again divided on the critical issue of chemical weapons use in Syria. Everybody around this table agrees about the relevance of the Mechanism, not only with respect to deterrence but also to dealing with ongoing allegations about the use of chemical weapons in Syria, in a context where there is a risk of chemical terrorism.

The delegation of Senegal voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2017/962), bearing in mind the indescribable suffering of the Syrian population. They have been the victim of all kinds of atrocities, including painful, slow deaths as a result of burns from chemical weapons. We did so as well because we are persuaded of the utility of the Joint Investigative Mechanism tasked with implementing, in an independent, impartial and objective manner, the mandate conferred on it by 2235 (2015), a mandate unanimously renewed by resolution 2319 (2016). That is why we welcome the openness and spirit of compromise demonstrated by the United States as the penholder, including by taking into account the legitimate concerns of many Member States with respect to improving the methodology of the work of the Mechanism so as to ensure the quality of its reports.

Despite the outcome of this vote and the deeply diverging views in the Council on the seventh report (S/2017/904, annex) my delegation is of the view that it is still possible for us to arrive at a consensus, at the unanimity that prevailed at the establishment of the Mechanism and to arrive at its renewal. We also welcome the reaffirmation by the American delegation to persevere in its efforts along those lines. We invite all other members to pursue those efforts, to demonstrate compromise to preserve the Mechanism, which for us is an important component of the global non-proliferation architecture. Hence, my delegation reiterates its complete support for the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which has made commendable efforts, pursuant to the relevant Council resolutions, to establish responsibility for the unacceptable use of chemical substances as weapons against the civilian population in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates the imperative of arriving at a negotiated political solution to the Syrian crisis on the basis of the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) and resolution 2354 (2017).

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is gravely concerned about chemical weapon attacks in Syria and expresses its sympathy to the Syrian people for their sufferings. China is firmly opposed to the use of chemical weapons by whichever country, organization or person, for whatever purposes and under whatever circumstances.

We have always maintained that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) should carry out comprehensive, objective and impartial investigations into chemical weapon attacks in Syria, basing its work on solid evidence, and draw conclusions that can stand the test of time and reality. Only if it does so can the perpetrators of chemical weapon attacks in Syria and those accountable be brought to justice and can the Syrian people be free from the sufferings caused by chemical weapon attacks.

China has noted that in its recent report (S/2017/904, annex), the JIM has indicated that for security reasons, and because the attacks occurred too long ago, it decided not to go to Khan Shaykhun and Umm Hawsh for on-site visits. We have also noted that some Council members have different views regarding the methodology and

conclusions of the JIM. China supports the Mechanism in further carrying out its work. At the same time, we also hope that it will improve its working methods and procedures, overcome difficulties and problems relating to on-site investigations, use more scientific and rational methods for investigation and evidence collection, and further improve its performance so as to ensure the reliability and credibility of the conclusions and address the concerns of all the parties.

By the draft resolution that was just put to a vote (S/2017/962), the Council would have decided to extend the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism by one year. It contained some positive provisions, such as condemning chemical weapon attacks in Syria, calling for investigations into the incidents, calling upon all the parties to assist the Mechanism in carrying out on-site visits, and expressing concerns about the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, particularly terrorist organizations. However, with regard to specific measures to improve the working methods, the draft did not fully address the legitimate concerns of some Council members. In view of those considerations, China abstained.

With the joint efforts of all the parties, the Astana talks registered good results. A new round of Geneva talks will soon be held. A political settlement of the question of Syria is now at a critical stage. The Council should proceed from the overarching goal of reaching a political settlement on the question of Syria, remain united on the question of chemical weapons in Syria and create favourable conditions for a political settlement. On that question, the international community should join hands and push all the parties in Syria to pursue, under the auspices of the United Nations, a political process that is owned and led by the Syrians so as to reach a solution that is acceptable to all.

China will continue to play a constructive role in seeking a political settlement so as to find a comprehensive, just and proper solution to the question in Syria at an early date.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Japan supported and co-sponsored the draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2017/962) because we believe that it would have been the best way to keep the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in operation, while addressing various issues raised during the discussion on improving the work of the JIM at the latest Council meeting on this item, on 7 November (see S/PV.8090).

Japan has repeatedly stated that we have confidence in the expertise, impartiality and professionalism of the JIM. Its work should continue until all perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons have been identified.

It is deeply regrettable that the Security Council has again failed to overcome its differences. There is no change in the fact that the Council is ultimately responsible for ensuring accountability for the use of chemical weapons. I call on Council members not to abandon our efforts to prevent the further use of chemical weapons and not to allow impunity.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt reiterates its complete rejection of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, based on our firm position against the use of any kinds of weapons of mass destruction and their ownership, development or attempts to acquire such weapons. We continue to safeguard and care about the well-being of the fraternal Syrian people who are suffering from the use of those chemical weapons. For many years, their suffering has been unspeakable because of the conflict in that country.

In that context, Egypt reiterates once again its position, demanding the identification of the parties responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria by means of an investigation that would meet all the substantive criteria to perform the task at hand.

Experience has proven throughout the existencce of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) that there is a pressing need to improve its methodology, particularly through carrying out field visits to the sites that are under investigation because they have witnessed the use of chemical weapons. These visits should include the excavation, recording and collection of evidence and samples. The JIM should also study and explore all possible scenarios related to incidents of the use of chemical weapons.

Egypt has sought to include in any draft resolution on the renewal of the JIM mandate before the Security Council all the bases and principles that would ensure that it is able to operate, without excessive technicalities that could obstruct its implementation and in a way that would help to collect solid, trustworthy evidence. However, our proposals have not been received very positively or realistically. On the other hand, Egypt

has underscored the importance of the work of the JIM and of improving its methodology, which would require separating the renewal of its mandate from the issue of addressing its reports. The reports are the substantive aspect of the Mechanism's work and its results, and should be addressed independently of the issue of renewing the mandate and developing its methodology. This principled position led Egypt to support the draft resolution submitted by the United States in October (S/2017/884), which was limited to renewing the Mechanism's mandate without relating it to the content of its reports.

In the past few days, Egypt has attempted in all sincerity to arrive at a balanced, compromise alternative that would enable the Security Council to renew the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and improve its methodology, with a focus on the substantive observations that have been presented regarding its methodology and the implications of that since the renewal of its mandate last year. However, the two draft resolutions submitted in the past few days (S/2017/933 and S/2017/962) did not take those concerns into consideration. That did not help us to achieve the desired result, and the Security Council reached a negative conclusion on the issue of renewing the mandate.

Egypt abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2017/962, extending the mandate of the JIM, despite our position in favour of identifying the parties responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We intended to abstain in the voting on the second draft resolution (S/2017/933), which was withdrawn, because it polarized the handling of the conclusions of the Mechanism's report and the renewal of its mandate, resulting in an inability to achieve the objectives sought by the international community — that is, the renewal of the Mechanism's mandate and the adoption of working methods that would guarantee evidence-based, indisputable results with respect to the identity of the perpetrators in Syria.

Egypt is ready to revisit its position and overcome fixed political positions in order to put the interests of the Syrian people first. The Security Council, having established the Joint Investigative Mechanism, is responsible for guaranteeing everything it needs to do an impartial job in carrying out its task of identifying the persons and entities responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Egypt is it prepared to work with all interested parties and stakeholders to provide the groundwork and criteria needed to guarantee an objective investigation.

Egypt once again affirms that the only motive behind our position on the issue of renewing the JIM and improving its methodology is to work in the interests of our brother people of Syria, to ensure that the use of chemical weapons in Syria does not recur and to identify those responsible for using these weapons in the past. That is consistent with our efforts to end the Syrian people's suffering and achieve a final political settlement that will guarantee them a life of dignity and security.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): As we all know, the Russian Federation was unable to support the draft resolution (S/2017/962) submitted by the United States delegation. Today we have been told that we refused to engage in consultations or to communicate. That is not so, since our experts did indeed communicate whenever they were reached out to.

Over the past few weeks, we have patiently explained that we cannot take the proposed concept seriously. It was wrong from the start in that it was geared towards entrenching the systemic flaws in the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism as well as that of the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Today's statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States was focused not on the Mechanism but, as usual, on Russia. Clearly, we will also be hearing repeated accusations of Russia in interviews and press releases.

Today my British colleague referred to — even, one might say, blurted out and betrayed, and I am very grateful to him for his frankness — the main point that this spectacle was conceived and based on. The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom said that there is no place for Russia in the political process in Syria. There we are. That is why this whole unscrupulous performance was devised, to cast doubt on Russia's role in the political process for resolving the Syrian crisis. I would like to thank Mr. Rycroft for saying out loud what many could not bring themselves to do.

There was nothing balanced about the United States draft resolution. The main emphases in the text remained the same throughout the expert discussions. The changes made were merely cosmetic and did not deal with a single one of the flaws in the bodies investigating the Syrian chemical weapons dossier. We would like to remind our United States colleagues — and those who were not interested in examining the details when they supported the draft resolution, divorced from reality, submitted by the United States — that it is they who will bear the burden of responsibility if the Mechanism cannot be preserved. Russia is doing everything it can to prevent that from happening. It had appeared that we were united by one goal — extending the Mechanism's mandate and increasing its effectiveness in the interests of identifying the real perpetrators of chemical weapon crimes. It turns out, however, that some of our partners in the Security Council have other priorities.

From a historical perspective, many have now observed that the endless distortions regarding Damascus and chemical weapons, which were in fact removed and destroyed under OPCW oversight, are strongly reminiscent of the situation in Iraq almost 15 years ago. At the time, the representatives of the United States deliberately misled the international community, including the Security Council, in order to establish grounds for the intervention that ultimately resulted in immeasurable misery for Iraq and the entire region.

In his recently published memoir, Gordon Brown, former United Kingdom Prime Minister, openly discusses the dubious nature of the arguments supporting the military campaign launched against Iraq in 2003. As it turns out, the United States deliberately concealed from its closest allies the conclusions of its military specialists, who had been unable to establish any credible traces of Iraqi activity linked to weapons of mass destruction. This is not the first statesperson and will probably not be the last who over time has a stroke of insight or epiphany in relation to the mosntrous experiments in Iraq and Libya. Will this geopolitical laboratory never shut down?

Russia, which has always unconditionally supported the international regime on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, has proposed, not for the first time but so far without success, together with its Chinese partners, that the Security Council should tackle the issue of chemical terrorism in the Middle East seriously. Last year, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, our Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov proposed drafting an international convention to combat acts of chemical and biological terrorism. We call on everyone to join the discussions on the issue. Any delay on it could be very costly.

In conclusion, I would like to support my Bolivian colleague's proposal to resubmit draft resolution S/2017/933. We would like to be a co-sponsor of the draft resolution and propose that it be put it to the vote today.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Italy.

On six occasions, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) has certified the use of chemical weapons in Syria by the Syrian Government and Da'esh. Many other allegations are being investigated by the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the Syrian Arab Republic. We believe that the Security Council has the responsibility to address that serious trend, upholding the integrity and credibility of the crucial long-standing norms of our collective security and preserving paths for accountability. Preventing the recurrence of violations should also be a common priority for all Council members. The OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is a critical tool in that regard, and Italy fully supported the renewal of its mandate.

The draft resolution under consideration today (S/2017/962) was the result of an open negotiation in which Council members made a collective effort to strengthen the implementation of the JIM's mandate. A number of delegations suggested ways to ensure that the JIM operates more effectively, and the draft resolution included a number of those suggestions. At the same time, as many of us requested, the draft resolution protected the Mechanism's independence, preserved the integrity of its mandate and upheld the credibility of its past investigations. We believe that the draft resolution and the negotiations that led to it — and we thank the delegation of the United States for its continued efforts in that respect — embodied a willingness to find compromise and achieve common ground, meeting the concerns and principles expressed by all delegations.

We are deeply disappointed, therefore, by the result of the voting today, as it deprives the international community of a crucial tool for fighting impunity for

some of the most heinous and unacceptable crimes committed in Syria. The international community is now weaker, and our collective security architecture shakier, as a result of today's vote. But the outcome is difficult to accept. That is why we will continue to work with the other Council members on the issue — hopefully, immediately after this meeting — mindful of its crucial importance for the non-proliferation regime and the principle of accountability. We hope that collectively we will be able to return to the positive trend of cooperation and consensus on this crucial issue that we have been developing in the Council since 2013.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We need to understand the important discussions that have taken place in the Chamber today.

I invite Council members to review a report published by the *Daily Mail* in January 2013 and later withdrawn. The report includes the e-mail correspondence between sernior officials at a British company called Britam Defence. It describes a plot that was subsequently approved by Washington, D.C., whereby Qatar, in cooperation with Turkey, would finance and support rebels in Syria to use chemical weapons and then blame the Syrian Government for the use of those weapons. The report was published in a British newspaper in 2013, not a Syrian newspaper.

Unfortunately, some members of the Council are treating the cases of the false justifications that were made in the brazen invasion of Libya and Iraq as though they were incidents that would be forgotten by the Council, and could be repeated at any time with guaranteed impunity. We cannot allow thet. Fortunately, there are some members of the Council whose memory is still good, and they do not forget.

Russia did not obstruct the work of the Security Council today. It has worked to prevent another tragedy such as that witnessed in Libya and Iraq. It has preserved the integrity of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations at a time when integrity and purity have been lacking. The vote of the Russian Federation today has saved the Council from manipulating a United Nations mechanism whose Chair is supposed to have at least the same courage as the Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the Swedish Rolf Ekeus and the Australian Richard Butler, who refused to legitimize the United Kingdom-United States invasion of Iraq.

We in the Syrian Arab Republic — a founding Member of the United Nations — still believe that the Organization plays a vital role in finding solutions to crises when Member States comply with the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, foremost of which is the maintenance of international peace and security, which is the main responsibility of the Council.

However, the fact of the matter is that there are three permanent members of the Council who have adopted aggressive and hegemonic policies. They regard the United Nations and the Security Council as mere administrative offices or commercial entities in the service of achieving their goals. Fortunately, two permanent members, along with other states, oppose such practices and attenuate that hegemony and aggression. Were it not for those two countries, which are committed to the purposes of the Charter, to date the world would have experienced even more destruction, wars, crises and iterations of the Al-Nusra Front, which was created by those three countries when they decided to sponsor and finance terrorism and use it as a weapon against all those who oppose their interventionist policy. In the Syrian Arab Republic, we therefore continue to believe that it is the principles of international law and the purposes of the Charter that must govern international relations. We continue to believe that truth and justice will ultimately prevail, as the only alternative is chaos.

Accordingly, from the very beginning my Government has cooperated with the United Nations, its bodies, committees and numerous envoys. When armed terrorist groups carried out their crimes in Khan al-Assal, near Aleppo, on 19 March 2013, which marked the first case of the use of chemical weapons, the United Nations was the only entity from which my Government sought assistance to investigate the use of chemical weapons there. Only hours after that incident, I personally met with former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. I asked him to send an emergency mission to help the Syrian Government investigate the use of toxic chemical substances and identify the perpetrators. Within just a few hours following our meeting, as he told me, the Secretary-General consulted with the influential members of the Council.

He then called back to inform me that the United Nations would provide assistance only in determining whether chemical substances had been used, but that it would not be able to help identify the perpetrators of those crimes. Although we agreed to receive that incomplete mandate, it took four months for the Secretary-General to send an investigation mission, under the leadership of the Swedish professor Åke Sellström. Despite that unjustified delay of four months, the Mission has yet to set foot in Khan al-Assal. That was four and a half years ago. The mission has not yet gone to Khan al-Assal as a result of the fabrication of the Ghouta incidents, which took place just minutes before Mr. Sellström's mission was supposed to leave for Khan al-Assal.

I am recounting that story only because it has been repeated many times. It was a rather historic moment, as it showed that the mechanisms and committees established by the United Nations to investigate the use of chemical substances in Syria would not be permitted to establish the truth or carry out their work professionally, impartially, independently and transparently. The three States and their proxies in the region were focused on only one aspect — their conspiracy with armed terrorist groups to stage crimes using chemical substances against Syrian civilians and to accuse the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic of them because they have not found more dangerous types of weapon to carry out their interventionist and destructive agendas after having exhausted all other tricks up their sleeve.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, we are not at all opposed to the establishment of investigative mechanisms that are independent, honest and professional to determine who is responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. As I just said, we were the first to ask for such assistance. We believe that the draft resolution that was introduced by Russia and China and vetoed by three States since the beginning, was aimed at assisting the Mechanism to carry out its mandate, in accordance with the norms pursuant to the relevant international terms of reference, and steering it away from politicization and the pressure that has been exerted by the United States, the United Kingdom and France. This would have righted the course of its work in a way that would have enabled it to find that truth based on physical and conclusive evidence, which does not allow for multiple interpretations, falsification or manipulation. Any draft resolution failing to consider those standards and safeguards would be analogous to a mere PlayStation game and represent a desperate attempt to give to the dangerous endeavour of conducting investigation [illegible] relying on false witnesses, information given [illegible] the Al-Nusra Front, a terrorist group on their [illegible] affiliated with it, such as the White Helmets [illegible] warning mechanisms, as mentioned in the report of the Chairman of the Mechanism, that are able to get [illegible] unknown and can somehow detect chemical [illegible] carried by aircraft flying at a distance of [illegible] kilometres away.

I remind everyone that the United States delegation was quick to ask the Council to extend the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism only 48 hours after its seventh report (S/2017/904), although [illegible] although by then it had been revealed that the report had already been prepared and written in the dark rooms of London, Paris, and Washington, D.C. The leadership of the Mechanism only had to sign and seal the report to present it to the Council on 7 November (see S/PV.8080). It did not hesitate even with even noting the remarks made by Council members and responding to them at that meeting. I will not repeat the remarks that I made at last week's meeting in this Chamber on the legal, technical and scientific aspects that refute the report and all that it includes regarding the methodology and specious conclusions of the Mechanism related to Khan Shaykhun.

Some Council members may not be aware of the fact that a British expert from the United Kingdom Permanent Mission to the United Nations visited many permanent missions to advocate for the same findings of the report before it had even been submitted. When I say the same findings, I mean the exact same wording, terminology and information. What impartiality and professionalism are we talking about with the presence of a British expert who had promoted the same outcomes that were to be found in the report?

My country, Syria, reiterates that it has complied with the provisions of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Since we acceded to the Convention in 2013, we have presented no banned toxic chemical substances, as confirmed by Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Head of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, in her report to the Council that was submitted in June 2014 (S/2014/443, annex).

Syria considers the use of chemical to be an immoral act that must be condemned, regardless of where, when and under what conditions they are used.

In conclusion, together with a number of other Member States' Governments, we believe that the time has come for the Council to shoulder its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security with integrity and in a balanced manner. To that end, some members of the Council must ensure that their actions match their words, especially those that enthusiastically advocate for extending the Mechanism according to the American way. Those countries must demonstrate the same enthusiasm to ensure the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, some of which are based on Chapter VII of the Charter, and investigate violations of those resolutions by Governments of some States. Those countries should also consider the hundreds of letters that we sent to the Council on the support and funding of arms that has been and is still being provided by the Governments of the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey to armed terrorist groups in Syria and the ongoing support of Israel to the Al-Nusra Front in the separation zone of the occupied Golan, which led to the abduction of two members of the contingents of Fiji and the Philippines deployed to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.

I wish to inform you, Sir — and I am sure that you are aware of this — that I sent a letter yesterday to the President of the Council asking for an investigation into a documented report published by the British Broadcasting Corporation on the support provided by the so-called international coalition forces to terrorists of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). This support was supposedly under the cover of NGO channels, provide them with shelter and obstruct the operations of the Syrian Arab Army and its allies against ISIL. We look forward to the same level of enthusiasm that the Council demonstrated today in dealing with all the issues that I have mentioned in my statement.

The President: I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting for 15 minutes in order to prepare the documents for the consideration.

It is so decided.

The meeting was suspended at 3.55 p.m. and resumed at 4.15 p.m.

The President: Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/968, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the way in which you are conducting the work of this unusual meeting of the Council. We believe it is important that the text of the draft resolution (S/2017/968) that we are submitting be put before members of the Council for their consideration. We do not need to apologize for having recourse to the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

At the same time, we wish to make it clear that we wish the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to continue its work and we also want to address the concerns of other members of the Security Council. With that, my delegation would like to ask Security Council members for their support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation shares our common commitment to a world free of chemical weapons and is concerned about the continuing incidences of chemical terrorism in the Middle East. Our position is unchanged. We condemn the use of chemical weapons by anyone in any circumstances. The perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable.

Russia was part of the successful chemical disarmament of Syria from the start and was one of the founders of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to investigate incidents of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We believed that working professionally, responsibly and impartially, the Mechanism would be a good gift of clarifying who might be the perpetrators of possible chemical weapons attacks, based on irrefutable data. However, it became clear that there were fundamental flaws in the Mechanism's activities that would not permit us to formally consider the question of extending its operation. They include its method of working, namely, the fact that it focused exclusively on data from opposition groups and non-governmental sources, and it disregarded

for the entire range of tasks and methods provided for under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In the past few weeks we have frequently brought up the impossibility of considering extending the JIM's mandate without considering the conclusions of its seventh report (S/2017/904, annex), which are a complete shambles. The analysis of Russian specialists in that regard was submitted for the consideration of the States Members of the United Nations, and we discussed it at the Council's meeting on 7 November (see S/PV.8099). Suffice it to say that the version according to which a Syrian military aircraft dropped a sarin bomb on Khan Shaykhun is completely unrealistic, going as it does against the laws of physics and ballistics. A plane following the trajectory recorded by American radar would have been physically incapable of being involved in this act. An unguided missile could not have been dropped perpendicular to the aircraft and then have exploded more than five kilometres from it. Our country's specialists know the tactical and technical details of the Su-22 aircraft better than anyone and therefore categorically exclude that possibility. The report contains a ton of other errors and inconsistencies for which we did not receive any convincing explanations, though Mr. Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament, did attempt to respond to some questions — with no success, frankly. Her answers essentially refer back to the JIM's report and the very conclusions we wanted clarified, and we therefore got no real explanation. Mr. Muller, the Head of the JIM, focused on discussions with the press in a very strange way for someone reporting a supposedly independent investigative unit and in an interview on 9 November, with the New York Times, he took the liberty of making unfounded and insulting attacks on Russia that did his dignity no service.

Against the backdrop of a poorly investigation that cannot tolerate any criticism and seriously evaded up by individuals who transform its efforts that civilians like a house of cards when checked up on, the JIM had the nerve to come carefully worded against an entire State, the Syrian Arab Republic, by doing so the leadership of the Mechanism overstepped its own competence and interfered in some of the legitimate political speculations about Syria. Moreover, we know that Khan Shaykhun gives rise to a possibility of the attack happened as a result of an airstrike conducting the technical instruction of IS weapons factory. And we insist that they are.

Nonetheless, we want to preserve the Mechanism. The draft resolution (S/2017/968) that was first submitted today by us and has now been resubmitted by Bolivia, and which we will now put to the vote, is designed to extend the mandate with significant improvements in the quality of the JIM's work and to bring it fully in line with the high standards of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We are not about to infringe on the independence of the Mechanism's investigators. The task consists of establishing clear, transparent parameters for its activity, which would also help to prevent any further manipulation of the investigation's activities as supplied up until now by opponents of the Syrian Government.

The draft resolution directs the JIM to conduct its investigations in accordance with Chemical Weapons Convention practice, working at the actual sites of chemical incidents and using the entire range of methods and means at its disposal. The Security Council must be immediately informed of potential issues with access. If an investigation on the ground is still impossible, we propose that the Mechanism should ignore the results of its own investigations and submit findings from the OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission until a fully fledged investigation is possible, strengthening the ties between the two entities and enabling them to function as effectively as possible.

We cannot consider the investigation of the sarin incident in Khan Shaykhun concluded until the JIM has visited the site and collected samples at the Shayrat air base. The draft resolution includes specific provisions for that. It directs the Secretary-General to provide additional recommendations for building the JIM's capacity within a 30-day period and requires the Security Council to consider those proposals promptly.

We firmly believe that the Mechanism must take a more responsible approach to its obligations under the joint investigative mechanism and must be unbiased in investigating chemical weapons and the individuals behind them, be it the Syrian authorities or [illegible] and the numerous militants from Syria to the regard as a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, have been involved.

We are certain of the draft resolution we tried as much as possible to take the views of our Security Council partners into account and have included in it a number of ideas from the United States and several other Council members. In particular, we agreed to extend the mandate for a year rather than for a month, as

provided for in resolutions 2235 (2015) and 2118 (2013). We were willing to accept the operational paragraph on the re-evaluation of the conclusions from the JIM's reports of last year, confining it solely to the episode in the Sarmin area. At the time, the Mechanism based its conclusions on a version in which a chlorine-filled barrel bomb fell from a high altitude into a ventilation shaft of a diameter similar to the bomb's, even though the Mechanism itself knew — that unlikely, I unfortunate

We call on the members of the Security Council to vote in favour of the draft resolution, which, together with Bolivia and China, we are submitting for their consideration.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): There are a few things that I think we have to realize here. I think a lot of it has to do with governance — whether it was used or not, with the actors, whether they were to be trusted or not, with the process of how all of that played out, and where we go from there. Given that, I have a few comments to make.

First, we all voted. We voted that we were going to follow the rules. We were going to take the Russian draft resolution (S/2017/963) first and the United States draft resolution (S/2017/962) second. Bolivia showed a complete lack of respect for the Council by turning around and playing a game so as to have its vote after the vote on the United States draft resolution. We will have that vote, and it will have the same outcome. It is a member that always says it wants to be transparent. There was nothing transparent about that. Bolivia really tried to pull one over on the entire Council, and it is on Bolivia alone to deal with.

Secondly, the United States took the draft resolution very seriously. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) is one tool we strongly believe in. We engaged in good faith with Russia when we first came up with the JIM. We were all united together when we established the JIM. It was done for a reason. Security-related weapons usage in Syria continues, and people continue to die even as Members of this Council have supported the JIM and, I can add, have been thanked by Russia for supporting the JIM.

What is becoming obvious is that Russia's only interest in the JIM is to shield the Syrian regime from culpability. Russia wants to be able to say that the JIM was never created, that it failed the Syrian people, that it was a waste of time and money and that it was unable to do its job. That is not what we want. That is not what the Syrian people want. That is not what the Council wants. That is not what the Chemical Weapons Convention wants. That is not what the United Nations wants. That is not what the international community wants. That is not what the Syrian people want. That is not what the Syrian people want. That is not what the Syrian people want

because it wants to work with Iran and Syria to make sure that they have that all under control. If someone is okay with that, then he or she should make the decision. The United States is not okay with that.

So what I will say is that through this process we were very kind and tried to work with everyone — as we always do — because we think that every member is important. And we may smile, and we may work with everyone, and we may incorporate these changes, but the United States will not be disrespected. We worked for months on a draft resolution, and then they turn around and say, "Oh, can we come up with something else?" I have a draft resolution with every change that was requested, but we are going to allow one member to basically give a pass to chemical-weapons use in Syria.

I will tell my Russia friends this — the next chemical weapons attack is on their hands. The next protocol I hold up will be because they let it happen. Because by not having the JIM, they are basically telling the entire world that chemical weapons are okay to use. That is what we should be embarrassed about today.

The President: The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

Against:

France, Italy, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining:

Egypt, Ethiopia, Japan, Senegal

The draft resolution received [illegible] votes in favour and 4 abstentions. The draft resolution is not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now give the floor to those members who wish to make statements after the voting.

The Russian proposal to — as it calls it — find out who is to blame, yet again. But it does explain why Russia's report has not progressed in the Council for months. And it also explains why Russia has attempted to block the Council's fully independent and impartial investigation into an organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security into a media show.

I reiterate that we abstained in the voting on both draft resolutions only after we made strenuous efforts to bring differing positions closer together and to renew and enhance the performance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism without compromising its independence. We saw room for consensus and tried to build on it. However, this opportunity was not seized and the polarization continued until we reached today's outcome.

I reaffirm that consensus is possible. There is room for consensus if we have enough willpower. We are prepared to pursue our efforts to preserve the Mechanism and its independence.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine voted against the draft resolution initially proposed by the Russian Federation (S/2017/968) for several reasons.

First, we view the document as a deliberate attempt to undermine the credibility and independence of both the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) and the Fact-Finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (FFM).

Secondly, it appears from the text that the goal of the draft is to create artificial and unwarranted obstacles to independent investigations. Moreover, the attempt to micromanage the JIM and the FFM is nothing less than an ill-disguised effort to sabotage the work of both the Mission and the Mechanism.

Thirdly, it is also noteworthy that the document was not open for negotiation within the Council. That speaks volumes about the willingness of its authors to actually reach agreement on it and, by the way, to contribute to the draft resolution proposed by the United States (S/2017/962), which was the product of real negotiations.

All in all, we cannot support a scenario, the sole aim of which is to protect at any price the perpetrators of atrocious crimes in Syria from accountability.

Mr. Gombo (Japan): Japan did not support the draft resolution initially submitted by Russian Federation (S/2017/968) because we do not support re-assessments of the past work of the Organization for the Prohibition of

Chemical Weapons United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM).

While we take note of Russia's willingness to consider renewing the mandate of the JIM and Russia's wish to improve the work of the JIM, we believe that the best way to keep the JIM in operation was described in the draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2017/962), which failed to be adopted. There is no changing the fact that the Council is ultimately responsible for ensuring accountability for the use of chemical weapons. Again, I sincerely urge all members of the Council not to abandon our efforts and to continue discussions in order to find a way to prevent the further use of chemical weapons and not to allow impunity.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons inside Syria. We support investigations into the incidents so as to bring to justice the perpetrators and those responsible for unleashing the chemical-weapons attacks.

We support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in continuing its work. The draft resolution on which the Council voted (S/2017/962) contains the proposed extension of the JIM mandate by a year, condemns the chemical-weapons attacks in Syria, demands investigations, and expresses concern over the use of chemical weapons by non-State actors, including terrorist organizations. It also seeks to improve the JIM's working methods and mandate and to strengthen its on-site investigation and evidence collection, and proposes specific measures to improve the JIM's work and to ensure the reliability and credibility of the conclusions of its investigations.

China supported and voted in favour of the draft resolution. We regret the fact that it was not adopted.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are deeply disappointed that our initiative aimed at extending and improving the quality of the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to investigate instances of the use of chemical weapons in Syria did not receive the necessary support.

We insisted that various ideas would be used as an attempt to blame Russia for a possible disruption of the JIM's activities. On 16 October, with exactly the same intention, we were deliberately made to exercise our veto when there was no need for a vote on the first place (see S/PV.8071). We are not ruling out the possibility that the intention of defaming our country has superseded that of preserving the Mechanism. We will now listen to numerous comments from our colleagues around this table, intended for the press. The world will be awash in lies about what transpired today in the Security Council. As usual, Russia will be blamed for everything.

I get the impression that no one listens to me or hears me when I speak. Everything that I said in my statement — two statements, actually — was essentially ignored. We were accused of not taking part in consultations, even though we met at least three times at the expert level with our United States colleagues. We were accused of saying from the outset that we would not permit the adoption of the United States draft resolution. That is true, because the draft resolution proposed by the United States untouched the JIM's fundamental errors. But we proposed our own initiative. We have been accused of playing games. We think it is not we who are playing games but others who are playing games with us. We have been told that we welcome the results of the work of the JIM when terrorists are accused of chemical attacks while at the same time we are covering up for the Syrian Government. That is not true.

We are protesting about the JIM's blatant unprofessionalism, which is most likely intentional. To give an example from a different area, in an argument put forward in the Mechanism's seventh report (S/2017/904), arrows in support of the claim that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) used mustard gas at Umm Hawsh, the only evidence was that it was claimed that ISIL had been observed using it in the past, and the other group mentioned had not. Is that a professional investigation? It is simply ridiculous.

We firmly believe that people who are paying attention will understand what is really going on. Let me reiterate that in the past few years Russia, as a conscientious party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, has done a great deal of work with regard to the chemical demilitarization of Syria, including, among other things, helping to establish and support the JIM. During that entire time, we have consistently sought to focus the effectiveness of its work, with an effort at understanding from a number of our Western partners, being the main reason why we need a robust, professional investigative mechanism that

will help to prevent the threat of chemical terrorism in the region from spreading, but what others want is a puppet entity so that they can manipulate public opinion, an entity that will repeatedly accuse the Syrian Government of violating international norms, based on false information.

Those who voted against the draft resolution submitted by Russia and China bear full responsibility for shutting down the activities of the JIM.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you once again, Mr. President, for your leadership of the Council at this meeting.

We are of course as frustrated as the majority of the members around this table, given another collective failure on the part of the Council to work together to extend the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. I come from a country that has never used chemical weapons and a region that is in the process of successfully settling its very last armed conflict, that is free of nuclear weapons and that I believe has repeatedly demonstrated its respect for international law and the United Nations.

The representative of the United States has said here in effect a number that it is he has shown a lack of respect for the Council and has not acted transparently. We categorically reject those claims. They are absolutely unacceptable and untrue. Bolivia will not apologize for using the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council. We supported the draft resolution submitted by Russia at the outset of the meeting on [illegible] and it became clear that we were going to have to have recourse to the provisional rules of procedure. In doing so, a delegation that enjoys the same rights as every other delegation cannot be accused of exhibiting a lack of transparency or of not showing respect for the other members of the Security Council. That is unacceptable.

If we are talking about transparency and a lack of respect for the Security Council, perhaps we should recall the closed consultations held on 7 April at which we all worked to approve a draft resolution on the situation in Syria. Was it out of a lack of respect for the Security Council or a lack of transparency that, the whole time that we were trying to find a way out of that situation, the United States was planning an air strike on a military base in Syria, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations? That was an unacceptable unilateral action. Bolivia categorically rejects those accusations.

In any case, Bolivia will continue to work to extend the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. We hope that we can leave behind this media circus where we resort to finger-pointing at one another for failures of responsibility. We hope that we can offer a glimmer of hope to the victims of chemical-weapon attacks, not just in Syria but all over the world, and I reiterate my hope that future negotiations will succeed in extending the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be brief. I actually forgot to mention three issues that I think it is important to mention today. I would first like to sincerely thank you, Mr. President, for your stewardship of today's meeting. It has been difficult, but you managed to conduct it in truly presidential fashion. Secondly, I should recall something that I forgot to mention, which is that our alternative draft resolution (S/2017/970) was not submitted yesterday, but has been before the Council since 7 November.

Lastly, I would like to note, which I omitted to earlier, that while Bolivia clearly does not need Russia's protection, it does need support. In my view, the United States representative's accusations of a lack of transparency with regard to today's process on the part of the representative of Bolivia were completely unjustified. Regrettably, we see the lack transparency in today's voting process displayed by the counterparts of the negotiations.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.